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AMERICA AT WAR

THE QUEEN IN PERIL ON THE SEAS by Gordon Thomas 18
The incomparable 150,000-ton Queen Mary 2 may one day soon face her own "icebergs" in the forms of terrorists' acoustic sea mines.

SADDAM'S INTERROGATORS by Gordon Thomas 22
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CHARIOTS OF FIREPOWER, Part 4 by Staff Sgt. (P) Dillard J. Johnson 38
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Saddam In The Slammer, So Why Are We On Orange?



On the Cover Saddam Hussein, disheveled, disoriented, and dispirited, shortly after being dragged from his "spider hole" by American troops, about 10 miles south of his hometown, Tikrit. See story, page 22.



Paul Avallone



Robert W. Shimizu



Gary Paul Johnston

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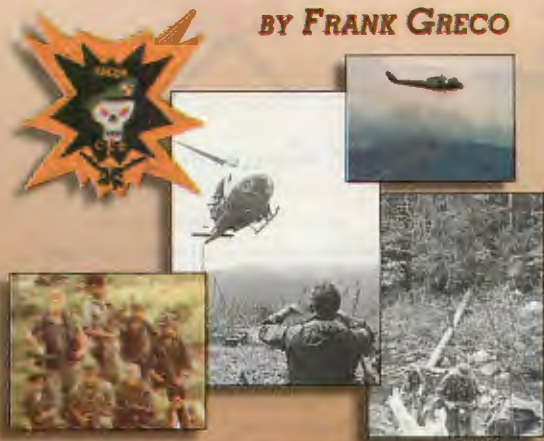
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Foreword by John Plaster

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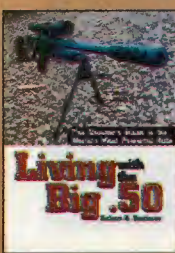


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COMMAND GUIDANCE

My Endorsement For The NRA Board Of Directors

BY LT. COL. ROBERT K. BROWN, USAR (RET.)
AND PRESENT NRA BOARD MEMBER

For many years, I have published a list of nominees for the Board of Directors of the National Rifle Association whom I have endorsed for election. Like most years, there are many outstanding candidates this year. However, there is a new candidate on the ballot this year that I feel so strongly about that I am breaking precedent and giving him my single and only endorsement.

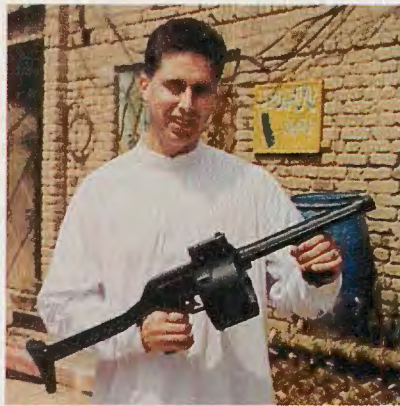
It is that important he be elected.

My single and only endorsement for election to the Board of Directors of the National Rifle Association in 2004 is Val J. Forgett, III.

I was good friends with Val's late father, Val, Sr., who was the founder of Navy Arms Company and was one of the top players in the international arms field for over 50 years. At the NRA, Val, Sr. was President of the National Firearms Museum and played a vital role in the museum's success. He was a man who knew how to cut through the clutter and get the job done.

In the case of Val Forgett, III, the proverbial apple didn't fall far from the tree.

I first met Val in the mid-1980s when he was just a teenager working as the Youth Editor of *Guns & Ammo Magazine*. At a time when the Sarah Brady's of the world were just starting to carp about "kids and guns," Val was writing about youth shooting and encouraging his fellow teenagers to be active in hunting and shooting. Val didn't just write about hunting and shooting, he participated at



Val J. Forgett, III.

the highest level. Not content to win junior championships, he competed and won senior competitions at the state level in IPSC, and at the world level in black powder trap.

Val graduated from Clemson University with a degree in military history. He started his own company, Gibbs Rifle Company, Inc., in gun-friendly West Virginia. Val made Gibbs one of the top international arms firms in the U.S. In the last 12 years, Gibbs has shipped hundreds of thousands of guns and tens of millions of rounds of ammunition to hunters, shooters and collectors all over the world. Val's quest for good guns and ammo to sell has taken him to all corners of the globe. He went to Israel during the Intifada, to Bogota, Colombia, at the height of terrorists abductions of foreigners, and to the tribal areas of Pakistan just months

Continued on page 81

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SOLDIER OF FORTUNE (USPS 525-810, ISSN 0145-6784), April 2004, Volume 29, Number 4, is published monthly by SOLDIER OF FORTUNE Inc., 5735 Arapahoe Ave., Suite A-5, Boulder, CO 80303-1340. Periodicals Postage is paid at Boulder, CO and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to SOLDIER OF FORTUNE, Subscription Department, POB 348, Mt Morris, IL 61054-0348 or call 1-800-877-5207. U.S. and APO-FPO subscription rate for twelve monthly issues \$29.95. Canada add \$15.00/yr. additional postage (includes GST tax registration business number: 12847 6249 RT). All other countries add \$40.00 U.S. FUNDS ONLY. Single Issue Price — U.S.: \$4.99; United Kingdom: £2.60; Canada: \$6.99. PRINTED IN THE USA.

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Continuing The Legacy



The Building Blocks of Democracy: Honest Men And Patriots

Thank you for the wonderful and accurate article on the capture of gold in Babylon. After the fall of the old regime, a new breed of honest people are appearing who are willing to take on the responsibility of re-building this country. I showed this article to many of my Iraqi and Coalition friends and peers and they were proud of this accomplishment. However, there was a minor error in the article: my name, the governor's brother, should be spelled as below. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,
Mouhaned Witwit Abu Saif Witwit

6.8: All Options Considered

I'm writing this without the advantage of having my copy in front of me. The local gun shop owner decided he needed to read it last night.

The 110g bullet seems to be under powered. Leaving the

barrel at 2600+ fps may be too slow. I like the 6.5mm. I hope they try the 100g 6.5mm and try to get it closer to 3000fps. It is tough to get devastating results from a bullet that does not penetrate a protective barrier. Compare the 100g 6.5 at 3000fps and the .277 110g at 2600+fps through a flack jacket and show the difference in ballistic gelatin. Compare the same rounds through steel plates of different thickness then try them again with AP projectiles.

I use the .270 Winchester with 110g bullets for prairie dogs and antelope. I clock them at 3200 (approx.)fps. My Browning A-Bolt gives me less than 1 MOA at 100 meters Please do not think I do not like the .277.

Dr. John Alfson
Monte Vista, CO

The intrepid team who developed the 6.8 REM SPC went there and did that as you suggest above, but keep in mind that the assortment of specifications for this caliber all had to be predicated on set of dimensions that would milk the maximum out of a cartridge case that was compatible with existing weapon envelopes. All options were tried, the best performers selected. There was some brilliantly eclectic engineering done on this project to get the best out of available components and technology.

Thou Shall Not Murder

I wanted to tell you how much I enjoyed Mr. Farnam's column in the Feb 04 issue. As a graduate of Lancaster Bible College, (Bachelor of Science in Bible, with a minor in Pastoral Studies) let me say that you were right on the money with your exegesis of the Sixth Commandment from Exodus 20:13. Living in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania as I do, I get tired of hearing pacifists decry anything to do with active self-defense. Your column was a breath of fresh air. Thank you.

As an aside, I have "put my money where my mouth is." I

Field Improvisation

Tell the editors that a prize should go to the soldier who is driving the Hummer on page 67 of the July 2003 issue. I always do in-depth inspections of the photos you publish.

This vehicle is equipped with the non-standard, duct-taped, snorkel-mounted video camera: Bet he has plenty of real stuff.

Wesley Grubb

You're right, a standard field improvisation would have made use of 100-mile-an-hour tape.



Gordon A. Flourens/REX FEATURES UPI

spent four years in the Army as a 71M, a Chaplain's Assistant Before anyone says "Garrison Puke", let me say I served with 1/4 Cavalry Bde (the Quarterhorse), 1st Inf Div (Mech), and the 1/72 Armor Bde (1st Tank), 2nd Inf Div., Camp Casey, South Korea. My biggest complaint in Korea was that they wouldn't let me mount a bracket for an M60 bipod on the hood of my Humvee!

In these troubled times, it is good to know that there are men such as yourselves who are willing to fight for their beliefs. I am proud to call such men my teachers. Keep up the good work!

Have a Cavalry Day!
Nathan Snell
Joel 3:10

Medalgate?

I'm writing this response to Col. Hackworth's Medalgate article. It stated that the Army has issued 5000+ bronze stars while the Marines have only issued 71. While this is quite a large gap, if you look at the history of the medal and the way it has been awarded you will see the Army is just following its own example from WWII. The U.S. Navy originally conceived the Bronze Star as a decoration comparable to the Air Medal for heroic/meritorious actions by ground forces. It was General George Marshall who championed the medal during WWII. He was looking for a way to reward frontline troops, and although Marshall wanted the Bronze Star to be awarded with the same freedom as the Air Medal it never came close. An exception to this was that the Bronze Star was awarded to every soldier of the 101st Airborne

Division who participated in the Normandy Invasion, Operation Market Garden, the Battle of the Bulge, or were wounded. In September 1947 the Bronze Star was authorized for all personnel that had received the Combat Infantryman's Badge or the Combat Medical Badge between December 7th 1941 to September 2nd, 1945. It was also awarded to personnel who participated on the defense of the Philippine Islands between December 7th, 1941 to May 10th, 1942 if their service was on the island of Luzon, Bataan Peninsula or the harbor defenses at Corregidor Island. It also replaced some early war awards of the Purple Heart when it was awarded for meritorious service rather than wounds. Maybe this will help to put into perspective the reason the Army has awarded so many Bronze Star medals during Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

Justin Mullins

SOF On the Shelves

I have been reading SOF for many years. I don't subscribe, one reason being as I buy from various bookstores that carry SOF in that it keeps them carrying SOF so that others might see it on the shelf and buy it too. Please stop referring to gun grabbers as gun controllers. The word gun grabber describes them much better, as gun controllers gives them a somewhat dignified title which they don't deserve. I was a police officer for years and would like to see stories of citizens who use their firearms in self-defense. Keep up the good work.

Robert M. (Bob) Stanley Jr.
Hixson, TN 37343

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Cornwall Calling

Your Mag is excellent, I've been reading it since the 70's, I joined Brit Military in 1971 & left in 1996, as a Staff Sgt, then joined the T.A [Territorial Army] Currently a Warrant Officer with an Infantry Battalion. Keep up the good work.

Via e-mail from Cornwall England

Your War Story In SOF

I have always been interested in your magazines: I absolutely love them. I am a recently separated Army Infantryman of the 3ID B Co 3/7 Infantry. Last July I returned from the war and separated from the Army on 31 Oct 2003. I am currently unemployed and looking for work ... no luck yet. Was wondering if you could help ... but my real reason for this letter is would you all be interested in maybe working with me to put some of my experiences in your mag. Either the firefights, general soldier stuff we experienced emotionally and physically or both. I am just interested in sharing my experiences with others in a way to help me cope with what I and some of my good friends along side me went thru. If you would like to contact me directly my number is 912-448-2283. Thank you for your time.

Mike Hull

Some of the best history has been written by those who made it. Check out the SOF web site for the "writer's guidelines" — you don't have to be a Hemingway to write for us (if you can do

a decent after-action report and have a story to tell we can take it from there). Good luck with your job search: We are publishing your number in case some employer out there is looking to hire someone who shows initiative.

Keeping Track

How do I go about finding a low-cost tracking device to embed in my child's clothing, or made into a necklace? Family relations are getting better but I still what to know where my kids are when they are out with their grandparents. I don't worry about their safety as far as health is concerned, but where will they be when it is time to come back home?

You didn't say how old your kids are, but tracking devices are available for pets (ask at your local Humane society), and for kids (see what your local PD community service officer may know.) There is a lot of such technology on the shelf, so you can try a Google search if your local officials can't help you. At our house, the kids try and keep track of me.

SOF solicits your letters by e-mail: editor@sofmag.com ; snail-mail: 5735 E. Arapahoe, Unit 5A, Boulder, CO 80303; or Fax: 303-444-5617. Lashes, laurels, comments, helpful information, questions are welcome. We may edit for space or clarity, and if two letters cover the same subject, the most concise one has the edge for publication. Visit our web site: www.sofmag.com . ✂

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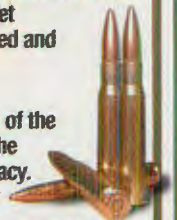
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Rallying Point For AW Ban Sunset

With the "Assault Weapon" [sic] ban due to sunset and fall off the U.S. Code like a dead wart, the antis are marshalling their forces to make it look as if it has done some good. The premise that it has been any sort of stumbling block to any sort of criminal is even more ludicrous now that it was when this ill-advised law was drafted — but that doesn't mean they won't be trying to get it extended. One very good grass-roots rallying point for the various coalitions working to make sure the AW Ban is allowed to sunset, is found on the web at www.awbansunset.com. There are several very good articles about the ban, how you can get effectively and personally get involved, and some very good resources — including flyers, posters and other printable files. Give it a look.

Help LEAA Sunset The AWB

LEAA is working hard to promote statewide Right-To-Carry laws, to pass H.R. 218 and to ensure that the Clinton Gun and Magazine ban is not extended or expanded. They need your help: They need your real-life stories to help LEAA set the record straight about guns used responsibly, especially for defense.

First are stories involving armed civilians helping law

enforcement, especially real-life incidents where armed citizens, especially those with concealed-carry permits, came to the aid of law-enforcement officers, whether or not shots were fired.

Second are compelling stories describing incidents wherein law-enforcement officers (active, off-duty or retired) have been harmed by the Clinton Gun and Magazine ban. (Examples might include, but are NOT limited to: problems buying so-called 'assault guns' or high-capacity magazines, secondary/private transfers and sales, guns and magazine possession after retirement, etc.)

For every story they'll need reference material: If in the press, the name and date of the publication where it appeared (a copy of the article or the URL of the website with the story is preferred). If the incident involved you, a friend, or fellow law-enforcement professional, it would be ideal if you could provide the contact information for those involved.

Send your true stories to them at:

LEAA True Stories Project
Law Enforcement Alliance of America
7700 Leesburg Pike, Suite 421
Falls Church, VA 22043
truestories@leaa.org
Fax: (703) 556-6485

Be sure to include your name, phone number and other contact info.

courtesy of Adrian Silva



Happy Birthday, Col. Bank! A group of former SF recently went to Dana Point, Calif., to help the "Father of Special Forces," Col. Aaron Bank, celebrate his 101st birthday. Col. Bank began his SpecOps career in WWII with the OSS in Nazi-occupied France, and founded the Special Forces unconventional warfare unit in 1952. Among those attending were Adrian Silva (kneeling), Col. Bank, Robert Jones, Mrs. Catherine Bank; (standing, from left) are Bill Sylvester, Steve Campbell, John Parker, Merle Eckles, Fred Lewis, Joe Hitt and John Snow.



Early communist tacticians noted there were a special class of activists they called "useful idiots." And when they have a retired U.S. Army NGO translate their protest banners for them, they suddenly become more useful ... and even more idiotic.

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Shocking NEW Video Reveals HOW TO KILL With Your Bare Hands! Learn 13 Lightning Fast, Heart Stopping Death Blows & Boa Constrictor Death Chokes!

Dear Friend,

My name is Jason Marks. I don't want to offend anybody, but **LET'S GET REAL:** When "Self-Defense" becomes "Do or Die," you need to know **How to Kill** instantly, without breaking a sweat.

Would you like to have those skills, so ingrained, that they switch on automatically when you need them most?

If so, **this is going to be the most important thing you ever read.** Here's why:

About 2 years ago, some young punks shoved me against a wall and put a knife to my throat. I thought I was prepared for it but I wasn't. I always imagined I'd be able to handle myself in this situation, but in fact...I **Completely Froze!**

Luckily for me a cop car pulled up and the punks ran away, because I'm convinced that **a Couple of Seconds Later and I would've been cold meat!**

You see, when the Grim Reaper appears, he doesn't give a damn about your rank or how good your form is. The Scum of the earth have no moral boundaries and they will stop at nothing to get what they want!

At that point, you'll be operating entirely on the Lizard Brain, the most primitive "Fight or Flight" part of your brain.

You won't have time to "think about it," or do fancy movements that look great in tournaments and movies. You'll automatically do one of two things:

1. **Unleash a rapid-fire barrage of nerve exploding, heart-stopping strikes, or...**
2. **Get carried off on a stretcher...or worse, in a Body Bag!**

I hope you never have to feel your veins turn to ice and your stomach sink as you know, *right then and there*, that you're about to be **Beaten Bloody, Raped or Killed.** But let's face it: **in today's world - it could happen at any time!**

The Karate schools aren't teaching this - they have rules, formalities and safety procedures they must observe to keep the soccer moms and sports-enthusiasts happy.

The scumbags and criminals on the street have **never** stepped into a dojo - but they **BRUTALIZE, RAPE and KILL every day!**

One Violent Crime every 5 Seconds
- Bureau of Justice Statistics

How do you deal with someone who can do that - and *has lots of experience doing it?* **HERE'S HOW: you learn what they know - How to Brutally Destroy, Maim or Kill without Hesitation or Doubt.** It's that simple.

When some bloodthirsty thug chooses you as his next piece of meat, if you can't do what he can do - you're dead! Here's the good news...

Andrew Scott teaches Law Enforcement, Military and Corporate personnel these techniques and charges thousands of bucks for it.

It can't be learned from a book, **you must see it in action, so I talked him into letting me put it all on a video - that you can watch in a single evening!**

RIGHT NOW is your chance to get these Deadly Techniques and **Make Them Your Own** for only \$47 bucks!

After you absorb this new video, I'm sure you'll agree with me - **it'll be the most valuable training video you'll ever own! Period. And I can Prove it to you.** Why would I say such a

thing? Because you'll learn:

1. **How to fire death blows before he knows what hit him.**
2. **The best (& worst) places to strike.**
3. **Shell out blistering combos, each strike more lethal than the last.**
4. **Mentally Program yourself to fire off a deadly sequence - without thinking.**
5. **Three Master Keys to making sure you score a Lethal Strike - every time.**
6. **What your Dojo isn't teaching, could get you killed!**

Listen. There are lots of guys selling videos in the magazines that have some really good stuff to offer, but this is the **only** video that gets to the bottom line and shows you **How!**

And the most important thing is: **It doesn't matter how old, slow, skinny or clumsy you are, or even how much you weigh! Even a Skinny Nerd can drop a Prison Hardcase like a sack of potatoes with these techniques!**

"As a veteran Military Police officer, I've been in just about every kind of violent encounter you could imagine...I know this stuff would work."

- Mark Underwood, Dallas, TX

Order within the next 14 days and you'll get these 2 FREE Bonuses:

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Don't put it off because once they're gone, they're gone, and I really mean that. You don't want to miss out on this, so be one of the first 50 to call now and you get \$217 worth of hard-hitting explosive material for **Just \$47 Bucks** plus \$8.00 S&H (foreign orders add \$12.00).

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Patriotic Heavy Metal: If you like The star Spangled Banner writ large and played loud, you will like the rest of this album as well. If you like military history set to heavy metal, this album will hold you transfixed. Just out. Look for it at music stores everywhere.

Good, And Timely, Read

More than a million and a half Americans served in the Korean War from 1950-1953: More than 36,000 never made it home alive. Almost none received the recognition for their sacrifices, nor a national understanding of why the burden they bore was so important. A pithy new volume edited by Richard Kolb (editor of VFW magazine), from VFW's Korean War 50th Anniversary Series, will go a long way in filling these voids. Historical works on the Korean War fall generally into two categories: expositions of a particular incident or battle that provide scant overview of the conflict, or lengthy tomes that provide overview only and scant detail. *Battles of the Korean War, Americans Engage in Deadly Combat, 1950-1953* covers the important middle ground by detailing the major battles one at a time, which keeps them in clear juxtaposition with other battles and the overall war effort. Profusely illustrated, clearly written. Highly recommended. Published by Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, ISBN 0-9743643-0-4 16. www.vfw.org

'Nother Good Read

SOF Contributing Editor John Weisman is also an accomplished writer of military thrillers. His most recent Black Ops novel, *SOAR*, is available through Amazon.Com, from your neighborhood bookstore. Check it out.

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The Art of Camouflage: Should an object look like it's not there, or should it look like something else that is there? You decide. (These studies courtesy of Leathernecks who are there, in the lands of Sand, Saddam and Osama.)

Bad M9 Magazines

Some insightful dope on mags for the jam-prone M9 pistol from John Farnam:

The after-market Beretta M-9 magazines that are causing reliability problems are manufactured by a company called Checkmate. They are trash, and merely replacing springs and followers does not fix them. How DOD ever contracted with such a dreadful manufacturer or, for that matter, ever accepted this scrap for issue to American soldiers is yet another great mystery.

If you're being deployed, lay in a supply of OEM, Beretta magazines before you leave and use them exclusively in your M-9. All after-market magazines are shoddy by comparison and none are recommended for any serious purpose. Checkmate also manufactures M-16 magazines. They are not recommended either.

Nothing is too good for our men.

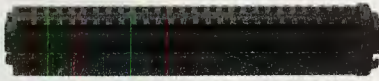
Operation Shield of Strength

Tens of thousands of GIs in Iraq and Afghanistan are wearing "unofficial issue" dog tags with a passage



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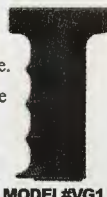
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- Interior of grip serves as a plugged storage compartment.
- Push button mounting & adjustment.



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from Joshua on one side — “I will be strong and courageous. I will not be terrified, or discouraged, for the Lord my God is with me wherever I go” — and the words “One Nation under God” on the other.

The Federalist, is coordinating sponsorship for the “Shield of Strength” tags, which cost \$1.10 apiece. More than 40,000 sponsors have responded, and the tags shipped to various theaters of operation.

Army Command Sgt. Maj. J. Clay wrote the *Federalist* from Iraq: “I cannot even begin to count how many soldiers are wearing them. It also has a spiritual camaraderie impact — for example, when you meet another ... military member and they have the shield on their ID tags ... it bonds you, even though you may not know them.”

For further information on how you may be part of this program, go to www.thefederalist.com.

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What the Ruck, Over?

Marines deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan and Liberia are reportedly less than pleased with the plastic-framed rucks, which break when fully loaded (and Leathernecks always go fully loaded). The various plastic fasteners such as the chest quick-releases are also prone to breakage, requiring lots of 100-mile-an-hour tape to keep them working. But 100-mile-an-hour tape doesn't quick release. Hmmm.

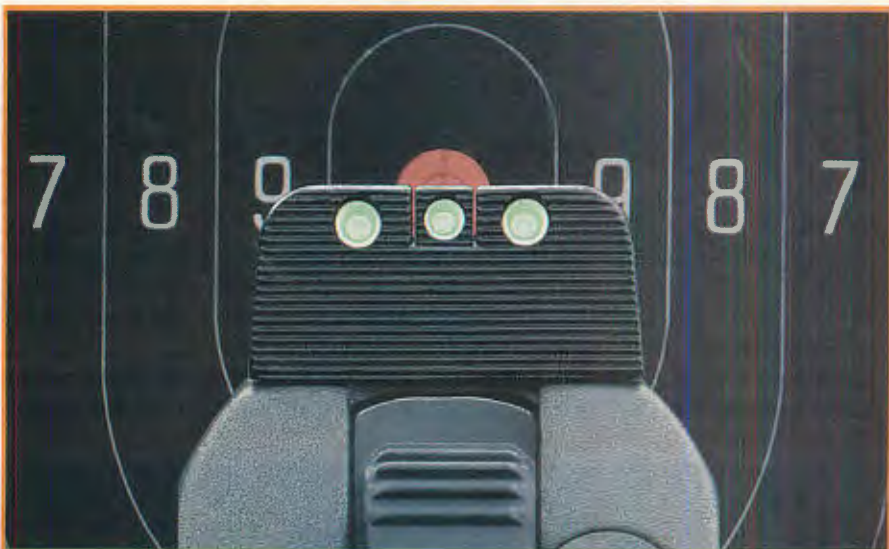
Cambodia Corps

Go to www.cambodiacorps.org and see what some SF vets are doing to help the Montagnards in Cambodia. Their small NGO in Ratanakiri Province is all-lean and able to do some good. Check 'em out and see if you can help, too.



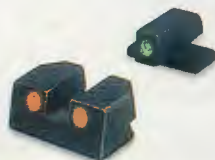
courtesy 1st Sgt. Dave Jobe

Baker Company, Marine Infantry Battalion, Iraq, pays tribute to fallen comrades last fall. We remember, as well.



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THE QUEEN IN PERIL ON THE SEAS

BY
GORDON
THOMAS

Queen Mary 2, the largest liner afloat, is now the world's top terrorist target at sea. It follows a U.S. Air Force spy plane discovering scores of acoustic sea mines have disappeared from a high-security naval base in North Korea. Over Christmas [2003], U.S. intelligence services — with America already on high alert for an al Qaeda attack — feared the mines were on board Osama bin Laden's armada of 28 ships now being hunted on the high seas by warships of several countries. The mines are fitted with devices which allow them to drift just beneath the surface and home on to a massive target like the 150,000-ton liner. The U.S. SP-3 spy

plane was on a surveillance flight to check North Korea's nuclear programme. South of the country's capital, Pyongyang, the aircraft's multi cameras filmed the naval base at Nampo. They spotted that since the last flight the mines inside an open pen had gone.

QM2 — berthed in Southampton waiting to be launched by the Queen in the New Year [2004] — is already guarded by the SAS, and Special Boat Services frogmen check its sleek black-painted hull. Cunard, QM2's owner, insist the liner is

The Queen Mary 2. The newest, biggest oceanliner in the world. Launched 8 January 2004.



Capital Pictures via newscom.com

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**WE WILL BRING YOU TO JUSTICE... OR WE
WILL BRING JUSTICE TO YOU. GEORGE W. BUSH
SPEAKING TO THE WORLD**



On September 11, 2001, war came to America. Today we confront an evil army of fanatics with a resolve not seen since World War II. Fighting this enemy is a new breed of heroes – our military units, police officers, firefighters, EMT's and other dedicated public safety professionals.

brave warriors, protecting the hands of freedom and enabling the weapons of the American operators and those of our allies.

As we prosecute this war, our professionals will have available a new class of top quality tactical gloves: HellStorm™ by BlackHawk® Industries. We are proud to be equipping these

Beneath the rubble in New York and Virginia and in the charred ashes of Pennsylvania lay our brothers, sisters and friends – the most recent American victims of this monstrous evil.

For those who committed these ghastly crimes, your days are numbered. We will find you and bring you to justice or before your God. Our cause is righteous and our courage unmatched. Be warned. We're coming for you.

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fully protected. "We have received reports of a threat. While we cannot discuss its nature, we are totally satisfied with our security precautions," said a spokesman.

But intelligence chiefs are less sanguine after the capture on December 1 of Ahmad Belai al-Nasheri, al Qaeda's chief of naval operations. He was carrying a 180-page manual that listed "targets of opportunity like large cruise liners sailing from British and American seaports."

Evidence shows he had planned to attack the Ark Royal as it passed through the Gibraltar Straits on its way to the Gulf War last Spring. The plot was foiled by MI6.

But over Christmas its agents and CIA interrogators have focussed on al Qaeda's plans to attack the QM2.

"The QM2 fits al Qaeda requirements. It is spectacular in size and prestige. It is a soft target as it is undefended and depends only on its speed to avoid trouble," said a senior intelligence source in London. The security services believe that any attack would come when the QM2 is at sea. A danger point has been identified when the liner's four 215 megawatt engines surge to top speed of the west coast of Ireland on its maiden voyage to Fort Lauderdale in Florida.

"The possibility of mines being dropped in its path cannot be discounted", said a former U.S. naval intelligence chief, Commander Albert Martin.

Former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defence, Graham Allison, has warned "there is no magical shield that would let you know something terrible is out there".

Over Christmas "chatter-chatter" — intelspeak for terror-

ist radio traffic — picked up as far apart as listening stations in Asia and Britain's GCHQ post on Cyprus, indicated that an attack "on a big sea target was being planned".

Homeland Security in Washington feared it could be at attack on oil tankers loading at refineries in Alaska or in the Gulf of Mexico. On Christmas night, analysts at the Terrorist Alert Centre in the Maryland countryside concluded if the mines were under bin Laden's control, they present a threat that Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge called "one that is far greater than September 11."

[At press time] On its maiden voyage on January 12, QM2 will carry 2,620 passengers. For six days, they will be pampered by 1,620 crew on what Cunard calls its "palace of pleasure."

The words have an eerie echo of how the ill-fated voyage of the Titanic was promoted. It hit an iceberg.

Waiting in the path of the QM2 could be a more deadly force.

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Gordon Thomas is a writer on intelligence — his many books include :

Gideon's Spies: The Secret History of Mossad

Robert Maxwell: Israel's Superspy

Seeds of Fire: China and the Story Behind the Attack on America

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Queen Mary 2: Fact File

Cost: £540 million.

Dimensions: Length 1,132 feet. Height 236 feet. Width 135 feet. Her 17 decks make her taller than the Statue of Liberty or the Colossus in Rome.

Weight: 150,000 tons, nearly twice as much as the original Queen Mary.

Complement: 2,600 passengers. 1,250 crew, chosen from the best of Cunard's fleet. All have been security checked by MI5.

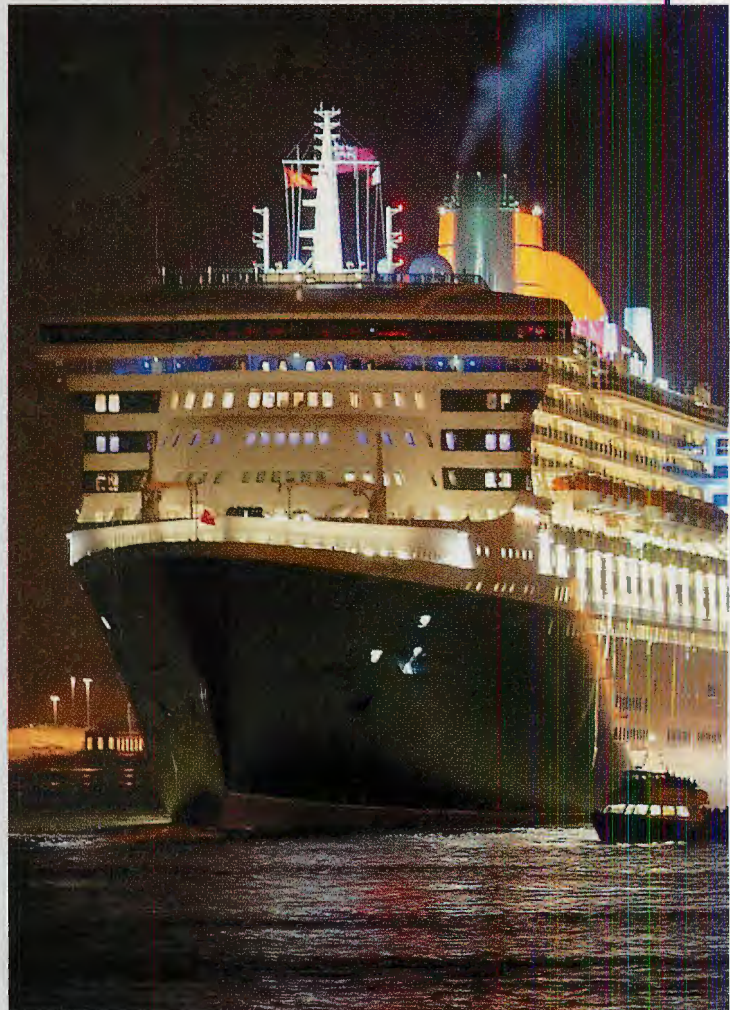
On Board Facilities: One thousand and one hundred-seat theatre, larger and better equipped than most West End of London or Broadway theatres; twenty thousand-square-foot education centre with its 500 seat planetarium; twenty thousand-square-foot health spa; a night club; casino; library; shops; 10 restaurants, 14 bars, 5 swimming pools.

Accommodation: 1,310 double staterooms. 30 specially equipped for disabled people. The 97 top of the range Queen's Grill suites have marble baths with whirlpool tubs, walks-in wardrobes and fully-stocked private bars.

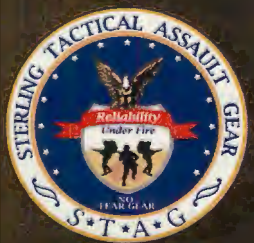
Dining: The Queen's Grill. Top-paying guests dine off Wedgewood bone china with an exclusive pattern designed especially for QM2. Ninety thousand pieces were commissioned, along with Waterford glass ware. The Princess Grill. For guests in the Junior Suites. Britannia Restaurant. It spans the entire width of the ship and is nearly three decks high. Seats 1,347 passengers. All guests are expected to "dress for dinner."

Things to do: Oxford University will provide a range of speakers and tutors to give a wide variety of workshops. Over 100 countries have provided 565 pieces of art valued at £3 million.

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Saddam's Interrogators



And Their Techniques To Make Him Talk

BY GORDON THOMAS

Britain's top interrogators — MI5's Eliza Manningham-Buller and Richard Dearlove of MI6 — are heading the team of British interrogators who will question Saddam Hussein.

Both are formidable inquisitors who broke Soviet spies and traitors during the Cold War. They will work closely with the U.S. interrogators led by CIA director George Tenet.

Hours after Saddam emerged from his hole, he came under the combined scrutiny of intelligence service psychiatrists, psychologists, behavioural scientists and psychoanalysts. They are known as “the specialists”.

They have prepared a detailed study of how the interrogators can break him.

The specialists studied the video footage of Saddam being medically examined. The search inside his mouth was not only to obtain a DNA swab — but to see if Saddam had a suicide tablet secreted in a back tooth. None was found.

The specialists concluded this was further proof that Saddam was not a suicide risk.

Nevertheless, he was dressed in a one-piece orange suit. It has fibre buttons that would dissolve if he tried to swallow them. The suit cloth is too strong to be torn to form a makeshift noose to hang himself. His feet are encased in soft fibre shoes which cannot be broken.

His cell in a U.S. base in Qatar is constantly monitored by cameras and guards.

His every move is noted and used to assess his ability to withstand the interrogation he will begin to face over Christmas.

In the esoteric language of the specialists, Saddam has not “allowed the loss of his personal boundary to effect his collective ego”.

Saddam is no longer the man on the video: bowed down with despair, suddenly aged beyond his 66 years, a haunted look in his eyes.

The specialists have concluded he then felt “stupid” at being caught. That would explain his “compulsive talking” to his soldier captors. It was to disguise his near paralysing fear at being dragged out of his hole.

“He may well have expected to be shot on the spot”, the specialists have told the interrogators.

But in the past few days [as we go to press], there has been a marked psychological shift in his mentality. His arrogance has returned. His eyes are no longer dull or his lips slack from confinement in his hole. There is a swagger about him.

All this has helped his interrogators to plan how to break him.

The interrogation team are considering secretly flying Saddam to one of the interrogation centres the team has in Kuwait or at the high-security United States Air Force base at Ramstein, near Frankfurt, Germany.



(above) Happy Troops! Third from left is Col. James Hickey (note his cocked-and-locked .45, rather than the standard-issue 9mm Beretta). Troop on the right is grinning, no doubt 'cause he's got

the cashbox. (below) A strongbox containing a portion of the U.S. \$750k found with Saddam in his underground lair. U.S. troops stand guard over the booty.



Each centre is purpose built. It is rocket-proof and guarded by elite U.S. Special Forces. It has a medical facility with doctors constantly on duty.

Intelligence sources admit that Saddam could be given truth drugs.

A senior British intelligence officer said: "There is a real urgency to discover everything Saddam knows about weapons of mass destruction and the whereabouts of associates running the suicide bombers in Iraq. Another key answer is what he knows about the whereabouts of Osama bin Laden".

In the hope of triggering some response, Tariq Aziz, the former deputy Iraqi prime minister, was taken to see Saddam. Aziz is currently in a prison camp outside Baghdad airport. He was flown by helicopter to confront Saddam — and urge him to talk.

Instead Saddam exploded — calling Aziz a traitor.

Truth drugs will be administered intravenously shortly before Saddam's interrogation begins — probably in the New Year. Drugs were used early on in their captivity on Taliban and Al Qaeda prisoners on Guantanamo Bay to try and discover where bin Laden is hiding.

By the time interrogators get to work on Saddam, his links with the outside world will have been totally severed.

He will have no idea of time or date. There will be no such



The "spider-hole" from which Saddam Hussein was snatched.

Commentary On Saddam's Pix

BY JOHN WEISMAN

Last month, I posted the picture of Saddam Hussein at the moment of his capture, the covershot, on Military.Com's website. I did so for a number of reasons. Sure, the photo was visual evidence of our success in Iraq. It depicted Saddam in a manner in which he'd never been shown before. And it is an absolutely amazing photograph. The kinetic energy is breathtaking. Believe me, I've read a lot of accounts of Saddam's capture, and this one picture tells me more in a couple of seconds than all the thousands of words. The other three pix are no less compelling: the pumped expression on the young trooper holding a box containing the \$750,000 Saddam had in his rat-hole, and the ecstatic look on Col. Hickey's face tell you how happy these heroes of his were to have just completed the mission of a lifetime.

And the primary reason I posted the picture was that I believed — and still do — that seeing Saddam as he deserved to be seen that would be an incredible morale-booster to all of our soldiers who are putting their lives on the line 24/7 to keep America safe. This photo of Saddam is visceral evidence that our soldiers are prevailing.

But from the outraged protests coming from Baghdad and CENTCOM, you might have thought I'd just given away all our Op-Planning for the next six months.

And the reason for the protests? It was that posting the picture of Saddam in the dust was making life difficult for Army public affairs officers.

That's right — it was creating problems for paper warriors. As one PAO told me, she had to field questions from a British tabloid that maintained showing Saddam in such

a sorry state would create resentment on the "Arab Street," and wanted CENTCOM's reaction. She was having a hard time, she said, formulating an answer.

What about "F*** You, Strong Message Follows"?

These are newspapers, after all, that don't hesitate to splash photos of dead American soldiers on their front pages if they think it'll increase circulation. Remember the shots of our dead Delta shooters being dragged naked through the streets of Mogadishu?

And sensitivity toward the Arab Street didn't stop a representative of London's *Daily Mirror* — an anti-American paper that by the way was one of the major sponsors of the February, 2003, [massive] protest march against U.S. policy in Iraq — from offering me a Saddam-sized cache of cash if I could come up with more pictures of Saddam exclusively for them.

Besides, from the e-mail I've been getting from the field, I made the right call — and so did *Soldier Of Fortune*. As one E-6 based at Freedom AB in Afghanistan wrote me, "This 'expletive deleted' who said you should take it off [the site] should have their head examined — with a sledge."

Bottom line: Keep sending those pictures and emails and we'll keep putting them out. You people are doing a great job out there. Your efforts deserve to be seen and reported-not spun, or apologized for.

HOOAH!


— John Weisman

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A soldier in camouflage gear is shown from the chest up, aiming a rifle. The soldier is wearing a tan and brown camouflage jacket and a matching hat. The rifle is a modern assault rifle with a black finish. In the background, an American flag is visible, with its stars and stripes clearly shown. The overall scene is set outdoors, possibly on a battlefield or training area.

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thing as day or night. The normal patterns of waking and sleeping and meal times will be deliberately disrupted.

There will be no physical torture. But he will receive what one intelligence officer calls "the full coercive treatment".

But the interrogators do not underestimate their challenge.

The intelligence officer said: "Saddam presents a unique challenge. He is a man who saw himself as morally, spiritually and intellectually superior to the Western world.

"Coercive treatment will include sitting for hours with a hood over his head to increase his isolation. All the time, the questions will be to increase anger in his mind about being betrayed. For someone like Saddam, betrayal will be hard to cope with. Being confronted with Tariq Aziz was part of that. The interrogators will tell Saddam that Aziz is looking out for Number One. Saddam could do the same by revealing what he knows — which is a great deal", explained the senior intelligence officer in London. He is a trained interrogator.

Interrogators like Eliza Manningham-Buller and Richard Dearlove know that nothing will rattle Saddam more than facts he believed were secret.

"It will assault his sense of impor-

There will
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gence officer
calls "the full
coercive
treatment."

tance and he will think more about lying because he could be caught out", said the intelligence officer.

Members of the team will include Arabic speakers.

"Part of their job will be to see how Saddam answers in his own language. In Arabic certain words can have very different meanings.

If he chooses to use one that is not correct, his interrogators will show he knows the right meaning", said the intelligence officer.

After each interrogation — which could last for many hours, with the questions coming and going — Saddam will be assessed by the specialists.

They will be looking to see how he responded to certain questions. Was he lying? Covering up? Did those eye blinks caught on camera indicate sudden fear? Or was it arrogance or even indifference?

One of Mossad's top interrogators was Michael Koubi. To even seasoned inquisitors like Manningham-Buller and Dearlove, Koubi is regarded as probably the world's leading interrogator. He lives today in Ashkelon, near Israel's Gaza Strip. He knows exactly how the interrogators and their support team of specialists will be working on Saddam.

"The first thing is to establish their

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superiority over Saddam. To remove his self of self-control. At every stage, they will be looking for his weak point", said Koubi.

Those weak points will include playing on Saddam's loss of power and the indifference to his family's fate.

"The interrogators will lie to him. They will force him to keep eye contact as they press their questions. When he will look away, as he is bound to do, they will continue to stare at him silently. Saddam is not used to this. It will be unnerving for him to experience such treatment", said Koubi.

From time to time, the interrogators will ask questions they know Saddam cannot answer. What was going on in Washington and London in the run-up to the Gulf War? Where was he on a certain date? When he cannot answer, he will be accused of covering-up.

"After a while, a question will be slipped in that he can answer. If the interrogators have done their ground work properly, he will be glad to answer it. Then the questions will move to other questions they want him to answer," said the British intelligence officer.

The interrogators will offer simple inducements. If Saddam answers a series of questions, he will be promised unin-

The deadly mind-games will continue until the interrogators and specialists are satisfied that no more can be wrung out of Saddam Hussein.

terrupted sleep. And possibly a change in his carefully monitored diet. But always the promises will not be quite kept. And followed by more promises that if he continues to cooperate, they will be fulfilled.

The deadly mind-games will continue until the interrogators and specialists are satisfied that no more can be wrung out of Saddam Hussein.

Then he will be left to his fate. More, he will know by then, he cannot expect.

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Gordon Thomas is a writer on intelligence — his many books include:

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THIS TOP TERRORIST NEEDS KILLING

How Clinton Let Him Get Away

BY LT. COL. ROGER CHARLES, USMC (RET.)

Hardly a day goes by that retired Marine Colonel John Garrett doesn't wonder if this is the day that Imad Mughniyah steps out of the shadows to make his next deadly strike against the United States. For the past 20 years, Mughniyah has plotted and then acted to murder Garrett's fellow Americans.

Garrett is certain of two things — that unless Mughniyah is himself taken out, this cold, calculating killer will continue to murder Americans. And, if history is any guide, his successes will be spectacular.

Former Navy SEAL Platoon Commander, Tom Short goes through his day with similar concerns.

Ditto for former Marine sniper platoon commander Bill McSwain.

And these concerns are echoed and amplified by former CIA member of its clandestine services, and best-selling author, Bob Baer. Baer spent much of his career in the bazaars and back alleys of the Middle East and made a specialty of studying Imad Mughniyah.

"He is the most dangerous terrorist we've ever faced. He's a pathological murderer," says Baer. "Mughniyah is probably the most intelligent, most capable operative we've ever run across, including the KGB or anybody else. He enters by one door; exits by another. Changes



courtesy author

his cars daily. Never makes appointments on a telephone; never is predictable. He only uses people that are related to him that he can trust. He doesn't just recruit people. He is the master terrorist, the grail that we have been after since 1983."

That year Mughniyah is credited with using a car bomb to destroy the U.S. Embassy in April, killing several key members of the CIA's Near-East Division who were attending a regional meeting at the embassy. The embassy staff had a total of 63 die that day.

Just six months later, Mughniyah made it personal for Colonel John Garrett when a suicide driver detonated a truck bomb inside the building serving as the barracks for Marines at the Beirut airport. Mughniyah's operation murdered 241 American servicemen — mostly Marines and Navy corpsmen. One of the murdered Marines was Capt. Mike Haskell who had been Garrett's first platoon sergeant in Viet Nam in 1969.

Garrett had stayed in contact with Haskell who rose through the

Imad Fayiz Mughniyah, as he appeared before he underwent a series of extensive plastic surgeries that substantially altered his appearance. Fortunately, Western intelligence services obtained his fingerprints from the hijacked TWA Flt 847.

ranks, making the rank of Captain by 1983. Haskell mailed Garrett from Beirut shortly before Mughniyah's attack on the Marine barracks. So for Colonel John Garrett, Imad Mughniyah was not just some abstract figure seen on slides in intelligence briefings.

Mughniyah had also kidnapped and murdered U.S. Marine Lieutenant Colonel Rich Higgins, a Garrett contemporary, and William Buckley, the CIA station chief in Beirut, and according to some informed authorities, personally tortured Buckley until he died.

In 1985, Mughniyah added to his bag of terrorist tactics, orchestrating the hijacking a TWA flight in the eastern Mediterranean. This operation produced one of the most brutal images of our times when the body of 2d Class Petty Officer, Navy diver Robert Stethem, was dumped from the airliner onto the tarmac at the Beirut airport. Mughniyah and his band of thugs had beaten Stethem for hours before deciding to shoot him and dump his remains in front of the dozens of assembled cameras.

For the ensuing two decades, Mughniyah has operated from the darkest shadows of Mid-east terrorism. He's used plastic surgery to alter his appearance so that what few photographs that do exist, may well be useless to the U.S. teams that have been on constant alert to launch snatch & grab operations should "actionable intelligence" be obtained.

Until 9/11/01 and the rise to cosmic celebrity of Osama bin Laden, Imad Mughniyah was America's number one terrorist target. He had killed more Americans by an order of magnitude than any other terrorist. Launching his attacks from the slums of South Beirut, or the terrorist training camps in the Bekka Valley of Lebanon, or the offices of the international branch of Iranian "wet" operations in Tehran, Mughniyah's success in producing lengthy lists of dead and wounded Americans was unequalled ... no other terrorist was even close.

So how then did these two Marine infantry officers and a Navy SEAL platoon commander, cross paths with one of the world's most elusive terrorist?

Exercise Rugged Nautilus

July and August 1996 was a time fraught with fraught for America's counter-terrorist community. The Summer Olympics was to open in Atlanta on July 19. The presidential conventions for both the national parties would take place in August. Late June had seen the attack at Khobar Towers where Mughniyah added almost a score of new victims, this time members of the USAF.

Wanting to at least look like their president took counter-terrorism seriously, the Clinton national security apparatus ordered U.S. military commanders to pre-position additional Special Operations Forces in the Persian Gulf as a contingency. The cover and deception plan involved hiding the movement of additional forces under the guise of a routine training exercise, in this case EXERCISE RUGGED NAUTILUS.



File photo of the Ibn Tufail

courtesy author

Central Command (CENTCOM) already had a robust counter-terrorist capability in theater in the form of a U.S. Navy Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) carrying the 13th MEU (SOC) [Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable)] with an attached SEAL platoon. (The ARG was generally referred to as the TARAWA ARG after the flagship, the USS TARARA (LHA-1)).

A second SEAL platoon and a detachment of Special Boat Team assets were quietly shipped into the Persian Gulf. By mid-July, nearly 4,000 Marines and sailors were locked and loaded (not counting the Navy Carrier Battle Group also on-station in the Gulf).

Get Ready

On 21 July, the U.S.S. RUSHMORE (LSD-47), with the ARG SEAL platoon, had received a close-hold mission from the Commander Fifth Fleet involving a Kuwaiti merchant ship, the Ibn Tufail, and a possible High Value Target that might be aboard. That possible target was Imad Mughniyah.

Just after hours after the other ships of the ARG pulled into Manama, Bahrain, for a long-scheduled liberty call, national intelligence assets reported that Imad Mughniyah was aboard the *Ibn Tufail* and that ship had just left port at Doha, Qatar, 85 statute miles to the southeast. Mughniyah was traveling under a false identity and with a very small security detachment; only about a half-dozen bodyguards. The tactical situation appeared to be near perfect for capturing or killing the number one terrorist on America's most-wanted list.

The operation was code-named GOLDEN OX RETURNS.

There was also a special bonus factor in the case of Mughniyah — he was currently under indictment. This was a hugely important point in the Clinton administration's counter-terrorism policy, a policy that emphasized the legalistic approach to dealing with terrorists (and one that was proven totally bankrupt and ineffectual on 9/11).

Garrett, received his warning order and immediately initi-



Imad Mughniyah (center, in jacket) and some of his thug "buddies" on 7/3/1988 watching CNN coverage of the shoot down of a commercial airliner by the U.S.S. Vincennes in Iranian airspace over the Persian Gulf.

courtesy author

ated the rapid-planning process that he and his staff had practiced until it seemed like second nature.

The initial focus of the Commander, 13th MEU (SOC), was not totally on Imad Mughniyah. First, the Marine colonel had to engage in some bureaucratic arm-wrestling with an on-scene SEAL commander, with a CIA Chief Of Station and even the head of an FBI detachment that was in place to escort back to the U.S. any high-value captives. Each one of these individuals thought he should be the boss, and his agency should be the controlling activity for the operation to snatch or kill Mughniyah. And of course, each saw Garrett and his MEU (SOC) of 2000-plus trained killers as a great subordinate element that could be safely trusted with doing the required "manual labor" while they and their agency took the credit back in Washington.

(Years later, a retired senior FBI official familiar with the circumstances involving the detachment sent to the Persian Gulf, was asked about the capability of this group to have commanded the operation to kill or capture Mughniyah. He laughed, and said, "They were fucking guards!" But these Louie Freeh-trained Potomac Princes cost time and effort from Garrett that he wished had been expended on other matters.)

After a come-to-Jesus conference call with all the various claimants, the Acting CINC at CENTCOM rightly gave Garrett primary responsibility for developing the tactical plan and commanding the forces that would kill or capture Mughniyah on board the *Ibn Tufail*. (The actual CINC, Army General J. Binford Peay, III, was in Washington, D.C., testifying before Congress on the Khobar Towers bombing. His Deputy CINC, Marine General Richard I. "Butch" Neal, was the Acting CINC at the Tampa, Florida, headquarters.)

Get Set

The newly assigned mission was one of eight Special Operations Missions that Garrett and his MEU (SOC) had practiced with the sailors of their ARG, and was called a VBSS (Visit, Board, Search and Seizure), or also, a MIO (Maritime Intercept Operation). Garrett was confident that his men would be up to the task, partly because they had successfully conducted such an operation on a previous deployment to the Persian Gulf.

On Christmas Day, 1994, Garrett's MEU had successfully taken down a Syrian flagged motor vessel for violating United Nations sanctions against Iraq. In July 1996 the physical target would again be a ship, but the importance of the mission was beyond comparison.

Garrett later gave a brief overview of how he saw his tactical scheme. "So it's the element of surprise, of combined arms, of massing everything that you have in a sequential or

phased manner, to try to get the advantage and maintain it."

"Simultaneous to that, ideally you have a surface up attack from boats or craft in the water to go up the side of the ship." (The two SEAL platoons would be using this mode of attack.)

And along with the element of surprise would go an effort to disturb and distract the targets' attention. USMC Harrier jump jets would scream over the *Ibn Tufail* at extremely low level. Some USMC helos would have Force Recon Teams fast-rope onto open areas of the ship while other Marine choppers hovered nearby with Marine snipers covering preselected sectors of the ship.

Garrett says that he had all these elements ready and in place. Success was not in doubt, if Garrett and his forces were ordered to execute the take-down.

As Garrett's staff kicked into high gear for the rapid planning cycle that would culminate with the assault to seize the *Ibn Tufail*, the ARG recalled sailors and Marines from liberty ashore in Manama. The ARG weighed anchor so quickly that a few hands were left stranded ashore as the ships sailed northeast to round the Qatar peninsula and begin their just-over-the-horizon shadowing of the *Ibn Tufail*.

U.S. national intelligence had only suspicions two days earlier that a High Value Target was aboard the Kuwaiti flagged merchant ship, but now that intelligence was considered "actionable."

The *TARAWA* ARG sailed to close the distance to the *Ibn Tufail* and proceeded to shadow the Kuwaiti freighter as it sailed southeasterly towards its next port of call — Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates. U.S. national intelligence had determined that Mughniyah planned to debark at that port. As the Navy ships maintained surveillance, Garrett's

men and others assigned to the operation rehearsed and drilled their takedown tactics and procedures — helos flew their planned flight profiles, Marines fast-rope onto small deck areas, SEALs and their surface assault boats rehearsed their boarding protocols, and the staff intelligence analysts pored over intelligence reports flooding the satellite channels between the ships and shore-based intelligence centers.

Tom Short put it this way: "I'd never seen the kind of intelligence we had during this mission. I mean, in less than 48 hours we had blueprints to the ship, the layout of the ship, pictures of the ship. Who was the crew, what they were carrying, what was their schedule? I mean it was just amazing to me the amount of intelligence that we had."

While Garrett was certainly paying attention to the intelligence picture, he was also focused on the clock. "Every minute counts. Time is of the essence. Every minute's golden. And so for 24 hours, we just planned around the clock," he recalled.

To augment the *TARAWA* ARG, an Aegis cruiser, the U.S.S. *Shiloh*, was detached from the Carrier Battle Group



Abu Haydar al-Musawi — a key collaborator and probable mentor to Imad Mughniyah. Al-Musawi is credited with having constructed the truck bomb used to blow up the Marine barracks building in Beirut on 10/23/83. He has more recently been the head of a terrorist group specializing in supporting suicide bombers against Israel.

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by Paul Thomas

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In a daring move with potentially serious ramifications, he's released a WEAPONS-focused version of his *TFT* system that shows you how to defeat a violent criminal in a **WORSE-than-worst-case scenario** -- in prison! After seeing his program... a life-or-death confrontation in a dark alley is a piece of cake.

Not only does this new series take you inside the criminal mind, it goes way beyond... showing you how and why you must first learn to USE a weapon... if you ever hope to defeat a criminal using it against you! Highly unconventional and extremely controversial it teaches you how to get your focus off the weapon... and onto defeating the REAL threat.

Packed into a tight video series, it's cold, calculated and very straightforward. There's no hype or bullshit. Just a total focus on dealing with violence.

You'll be shocked at it's focus on action and simplification. A criminal is all about simplicity -- "just stab him." Complicate how you deal with him and his simplicity wins... every time. That's part of why this system is unlike anything you've seen before!

But the program isn't about posturing, then getting into say, a knife fight. You may be good at knife fighting. Who cares. The real issue is: if you're involved in a violent crime and you need to bash someone's head in to save your life... can you do it?

Jim, a highly ranked spec op guy who saw parts of the videos noted, "If I ever walked through the gates of prison this is exactly what I'd need to know." And before you snicker about "never being in prison", remember this: run into Jake... and you ARE there!

During filming a woman holding the boom mic commented, "You can't show that. It's illegal!"

WRONG! That's why Larkin released his new

material in this format. Virtually everyone puts rules or restrictions into their self-protection system -- often without knowing it. Face a predator without morals or rules like yours and you're screwed. When it becomes life-or-death, you need to be able to go whole-hog... and this new program shows you whole-hog -- plus!

These videos will instantly change your mindset on how you picture yourself in a violent confrontation ... regardless of your training or whose videotapes you've watched. Even the military ones.

That's the world Larkin comes from so he knows it intimately. Yet he spends little time talking about his years as a spec op Naval officer because that just focuses on what he's done... and not **what YOU get** from his system!

He's quick to note that military systems notoriously are outdated and inefficient when dealing with on-the-street criminal violence. Sophisticated weapons and proficient operators mean hand-to-weapon training takes a back seat. Fine for them... bad for you.

It's why even though he trains military, government and law enforcement he's focused his efforts on worst-case civilian violent confrontations with dramatic success. He's trained individuals around the globe (in 2003 in Europe, Mexico and Australia, and even on a private cruise ship in the Baltic Sea); next year it's the Middle East and Asia. Real violence in the US often pales compared to the everyday international violence he's called in to prep for.

But terrorism and escalating violence in the US has compelled him to release his material in a dramatic new format. **There's nobody that's ever shown it like this.** Not even the military. Everyone is terrified of public reaction.

Larkin's take: you must know what gives you the greatest chance for surviving a lethal confrontation. "If it saves one life... it'll be worth the hassle I know I'm setting myself up for. To competently fight someone with a weapon you need to know how to fight with one... intimately. Now you're gonna see it."

Where others show you how to avoid a knife, he shows you how to work with and against it. They wind up **empowering the knife. He puts you in command!**

Some foolishly feel this stuff is too violent, ignoring the fact you don't need to push it to levels shown on these tapes. You can always ramp it down. It's just that you **can't ramp it up and kill someone if you've never done that before.**

Still he's taking a huge risk and will catch a lot of flack. Violence is ugly, vicious and upsetting and you'll see lots of disclaimers running across the screens of these videos. Some will be shocked, dismayed, offended and **outraged that anyone would dare show this stuff.** They'll raise a huge stink... and do everything possible to get this yanked. But better you see this on video than have Jake show you in real life!

Everything you'll see here is vintage *TFT*. You learn to hurt someone very quickly (every sequence shows killing movements right from the start). There's no size, speed or quickness required. Anyone can learn

this because it's based on principles not one person's skills.

Guys that have been in the trenches for years, those who have seen everything, are blown away by the simple brutality and effectiveness of this system, by its total focus on YOU and the competence of Larkin's instructors, including their knowledge of anatomy and how to inflict trauma on the human body. Each instructor averages 10 years of training, and Larkin himself has taught over 5,000 individuals worldwide.



Tim Larkin, creator of *Target-Focus Training*

Surprisingly most of his instructors aren't 'jocks'. Many have advanced degrees; five hold PhD's! When he says *TFT* is **built on science**... he isn't bullshitting. His advisory board includes two medical doctors who assure Larkin and his instructors offer accurate, scientific based, up-do-date information about inflicting trauma on the human body (that's why his system is so devastating: you learn not only the HOW... but the WHY).

Unfortunately a program this controversial isn't for everyone. If you think seeing what it takes to survive in prison is overkill, that it's "too lethal" or "too violent"; if you're uncomfortable using a knife or dealing with how people try to kill you; if you think this program's about some predetermined movements or that you're gonna see lots of cool setup techniques -- you can stop reading here.

This stuff WILL set your hair on edge... but realize a criminal on the street (or locked up in the pen) already knows this... he lives it every day. He doesn't need some video to learn from. That's why Larkin doesn't worry about this getting into the wrong hands. It's already there. You're the one who needs to see it. And now... for the very first time... you can.

Listen. I understand you may find all this hard to believe. Before I saw these videos that's how I felt too. Unfortunately there's not room here to adequately describe the **shocking reality of what Larkin has created for you.** That's why he's not asking for a penny of your money now. Instead he'll spend his own cash to put a detailed Special Report into your hands that will prove everything you've just read and explaining more about why this program is so TOTALLY DIFFERENT from anything you've every seen before.

All you need to do to get his **FREE** report is to pick up the phone and call **888-811-9347**. There's a short recorded message and then you can leave your name and address so the report can be mailed to you. Since it's voicemail you can call **24-hours a day, 7 days a week** and no one will hassle you.

Don't fool around and miss this opportunity. It doesn't cost you a thing. So go on-line or call right now.

then operating in the Persian Gulf. The Shiloh would serve as the "shouldering ship," that could crowd the target Ibn Tufail if necessary to force it to steer the course that best suited the tactical needs of the U.S. forces.

None of the amphibious ships that could be spared for "shouldering" duty had the required speed to keep up with, or perhaps even overtake, the *Ibn Tufail*. Use of the shouldering ship also allowed Garrett's Sniper Platoon to place four Marine sniper teams at battle stations on the cruiser to cover any hostile targets that showed themselves above deck.

Bill McSwain commanded the Sniper Platoon, "I had four sniper teams on the ship with me, arranged from bow to stern in different positions. And in addition, because this was such a critical mission, we actually put snipers in helicopters."

By nightfall of 24 July, the Americans knew they were just hours away from taking-down Imad Mughniyah.

"We almost felt like we were dogs on a leash ready to go," says McSwain.

Go!

There was one final briefing on the flagship of the admiral to whom Garrett reported. This was known as the "Confirmation Brief" — all the players would be asked by the admiral if they were ready, if they had any last minute concerns. It would be one of those classic, "speak now, or forever hold your peace," moments. Each principal participant or his trusted agent would brief his understanding of the overall mission, and his part in that mission, using simple charts.

The Confirmation Brief took about one hour, and at its end as participants departed to man their battle stations, the word from Washington, relayed through Gen. Neal in CENTCOM HQ was still, "all systems, GO." All that remained was for the tactical assault forces — two SEAL platoons and a Force Recon Platoon of Marines — to marry-up with their transport helos and fast assault boats, and begin movement to the objective. Backing them up were several hundred Marine grunts in the rifle companies of Garrett's 1st Battalion, 4th Marines, that were prepared to conduct a detailed search of the *Ibn Tufail* from bow to stern.

Garrett, independent of McSwain, later described the situation at this point in these terms. "... we're ready. We've finished the planning, and for the commander, you're sort of holding this leashed team of — of killer hounds, just wait-in' for the command to let 'em go. And that's where we were at that point."

Only minutes after that movement to the objective began, Imad Mughniyah and his guards would be facing "trigger time." While Garrett's saw his official mission as bringing Mughniyah to justice, the Arab terrorist's own actions would determine whether this translated into "kill" or "capture" onboard the *Ibn Tufail*.

Abort!

Then one word from the Clinton White House caused all the planning, all the adrenaline, and all the hoped for pay-

back — for thousands of American sailors and Marines — to come crashing down.

The operation was called off.

For Tom Short: "I was just stunned. I mean disbelief. I mean it had been almost 48 hours at that point. And none of us had slept, and at the end of that, they tell you that it's off. Not standby, not be prepared. To just forget about it."

The Navy SEAL leader said that he got the word that the operation had been canceled when he returned to the amphibious ship carrying his platoon immediately following the final Confirmation Briefing. When Short left the admiral's conference room for the 20-minute flight back to join his SEAL platoon, he was confident that after years of training,

he and his men were finally going to be allowed to "pull the trigger" and execute a counter-terrorist take down of a world-class terrorist. (Short admits that had time permitted, the U.S. would have flown in the Navy's SEAL Team Six, the Navy equivalent of the Army's Delta Force. But, time and tide wait for no man, and the U.S. National Command Authority had to use forces that were on-hand, on-scene.)

As Short stepped off the chopper onto the flight deck of his team's host ship, his Leading Chief Petty Officer gave him the word — the operation had been called off.

Lieutenant Short did not believe the message could be true. The SEAL platoon commander explained that he had just left the admiral's Confirmation Brief and "all systems were, GO!" The chief informed his platoon leader that while Short had been in transit, word had come down the chain of command that Washington had canceled the operation.

Short later said that one hour from the time his chopper landed on the deck of his host ship, he would have either

been on the bridge of the *Ibn Tufail*, in control of the merchantman, or he would have been dead. There would have been no in-between.

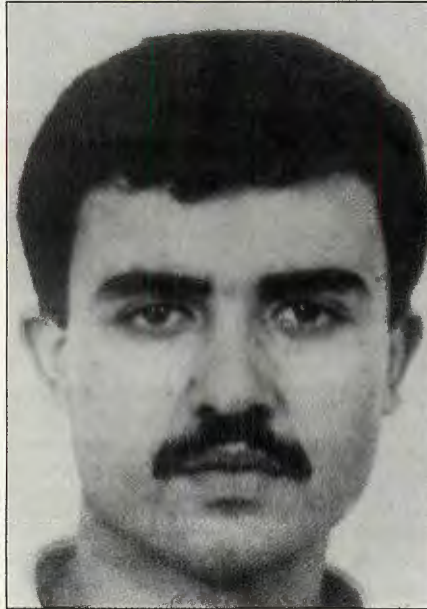
So, what happened to cause this literally last-minute cancellation?

Colonel John Garrett says, "The explanation that I recall was they couldn't verify that the target was still on board the vessel," Garrett believed that at the time. Now, he's not so certain.

And for some other men involved in the planning and support for the strike, that explanation wasn't enough. To this day, they blame President Clinton for not going through with the mission.

(Both Tom Short and the SEAL Platoon Commander of the other platoon, Lt. J.D. Denny resigned their commissions and entered civilian life. The debacle of the *Ibn Tufail* and Imad Mughniyah played a large part in both men's decisions.)

Nancy Soderberg, who was President Clinton's deputy assistant to the president for national security affairs was the only senior official willing to comment on the case, and she defended his decision in the *60 Minutes II* interview, "This is



Ali Atwa, one of Mughniyah's key operatives in the June 1985 hijacking of TWA Flt 847, and the murder of passenger Robert Stetham, a U.S. Navy petty officer, whose body was dumped on the tarmac at Beirut International Airport as Mughniyah's idea of a "photo op."

Continued on page 72

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"The #1 Total Body Fitness Program on the Planet - Turns You Into An Unstoppable Butt-Kicking Machine... Damn Near Instantly"

Follow the Legendary Routine That Simultaneously Catapults Your Strength, Endurance and Flexibility to record levels. Feel the results that tens of thousands are raving about worldwide...

by Frank Sherrill

I was the total skeptic. Not only had I lifted weights for years, but after 21 years in the martial arts and several more in the military, I thought I'd seen it all. So I just didn't believe **Matt Furey** when he said you can get kick-butt fit with body-weight calisthenics, that I figured I went through in bootcamp. Besides, I could bench 400 and squat 625. So there's no way I was going to fall for a routine that I figured I already knew. Been there, done that!

But I couldn't shake this feeling that Furey might be right. I had read about the **Great Gama** of India, a wrestler who followed this program and was unbeaten in 5,000 matches. In terms of size and strength, he was amazing. He was 5'7" and 260 pounds of streaming steel. And that was in the early 1900's - long before steroids.

I had heard that **Bruce Lee** did the exercises Furey teaches, too. And we all know about Lee's incredible ripped, lean, muscular look. Not to mention how lightning fast and fluid he was.

I had heard that **Herschel Walker**, a Heisman Trophy winner and All-Pro Running back did 500 pushups and situps each day. So that made me think even more.

And then the final straw was when I started to read all the testimonials that Furey had collected from fellow military (I have included several of them in this article).

And then, of course, there is Furey, the author of *Combat Conditioning* and the man GRAPPLING magazine dubbed "The King of Catch Wrestling." Furey has been featured in major martial arts magazines around the world, has been on the cover of several - and is certainly no slouch when it comes to having and using functional strength. He was a world champion in Shuai-chiao kung fu and a national collegiate champion wrestler. Something told me he had to be telling the truth.

I figured the only way I would ever know for sure would be to get the program and use it. I told myself that if what I was reading was nothing but marketing hype - I would not only be angry - but I would let everyone in the world know about it.

So I bought Furey's *Combat Conditioning* book and read it. In the book he challenges the readers with a test. 100 Hindu squats, followed by 50 Hindu pushups, then a one-minute back bridge.

Figuring this would be easy, I got started. At 40 Hindu squats my thighs were blitized. It took about 90 seconds; not long compared to my squat routine at the gym.

Next, I tried the Hindu pushups. Funny thing is my legs were still shaking. I dipped down and pushed back. At 15 my arms were throbbing. This couldn't be. No way. **I could bench like there's no tomorrow and this exercise was nuking me.** I gave up at 27 reps. This took about 1.5 minutes, so my workout had only been 2.5 minutes long.

Then the bridge. After three unsuccessful attempts of ten seconds, I gave up. The next day my legs, chest and arms were sore, but in a good way. I thought my legs got 10 times more work with weights, but I was wrong.

Over the course of three months my body changed big time. In fact, I've made a list of 12 of the most amazing benefits that I and thousands of others all over the world have gotten from the *Combat Conditioning* program. I'm betting these are important to you, too:

1. I blow-torched off my excess body fat so quickly that I could eat more than I normally did and still look better than ever.
2. I packed and chiseled functional muscle onto my legs, chest and back that I've never had before, even from weights.
3. I simultaneously doubled my strength and flexibility - and did so without needing separate workouts for each.
4. I quadrupled my endurance inside of 30 days. Just think how much this helped my sparring. No matter what, I NEVER get tired.
5. The chronic back and shoulder pain I had from years of heavy squats, deadlifts and bench pressing went away within a couple weeks. And much of that pain had been with me for nearly 10 years. It's GONE now.

6. I sleep like a log. Eight hours of deep sleep is no longer a goal. It's automatic. As soon as I hit the rack I'm out like a light.
7. My self-confidence knows no bounds. Especially when I got compliments from people who hardly paid attention to me before. I honestly believe there is nothing I cannot do. I'm on top of the world.
8. I can train anywhere. I don't need more than a few square feet of carpet or pavement and I'm all set. I have absolutely no excuses and my body is loving me for it. I don't need any equipment. Just my own bodyweight.
9. I get a kick-butt workout done in 15 minutes or less. Sure, I could do more - but I've gotten incredible results with this amount - so why ruin a good thing?
10. I've turned back the clock. My friends tell me I look 5 - 10 years younger. Awesome!
11. I have an explosive type of strength that weights couldn't give me. My movements are super fast even when I'm just screwing around.
12. My muscles are like a pliable and powerful tiger - ready to pounce on prey in a heartbeat.

So there you have it. The 12 reasons why *Combat Conditioning* is the best fitness program on the planet. But forget about me.

Take a look at what some others in the military have to say about this program:

Matt, I am a US Marine stationed overseas. I am also a wrestler/judoka and the Marine who developed the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program. I use your courses regularly. I like your no-nonsense approach. Particularly as I get older, bodyweight exercises are quick, flexible, all-encompassing and convenient. Keep up the good work!

Lt Colonel George Bristol - USMC

Mr. Furey,

We have been applying the principle of 'mastering your own body weight' to our football program and have been pleased. A 12 - 1 championship season last year was our reward. Thank you sir.

**Bonner Cummings
Yosemite, CA**

Dear Matt,

When I got your book, I changed my whole way of thinking about how one should train for Combatives. I am now totally off the weights, and, to tell you the truth, I have never felt better or been more flexible in my life. I feel great and have lost no size, strength, or muscle mass... as a result I scored the maximum number of points on the Army Physical Fitness test. HOOAH! You are doing great things, and I and the U.S. Army Officer Candidate School owe you a lot.

TRETT'EM ROUGH!

**CPT Judd D. Mahfouz -
Infantry**

Dear Mr. Furey,

*Let me say I have benefited a lot from both your *Combat Conditioning* and *Combat Abs* book. I am a Marine stationed on Okinawa, Japan and I do a lot of kickboxing and NHB fighting on the side. Your exercises have given me a tremendous advantage and combined with my other routines (shadowboxing, sparring, bagwork, wind sprints, and grappling drills) have gotten me into the best shape of my life.*

**LCpl Sandor Devenyi -
United States Marine Corps**



Matt Furey, author of the best-selling *Combat Conditioning*.

Dear Matt,

*Being a U.S. Marine in a field unit, I spend much of my time in Physical Training, and I'll admit, I thought that I was in peak physical condition. 2 months ago I began your *Combat Conditioning* program and quickly realized that I had been missing something. While platoon PT consists of mostly running and incorporates some bodyweight exercises (i.e. pushups, pull-ups, crunches) I had been spending the bulk of my personal training time in the weight room, lifting heavy. It embarrassed me the first time I tried to do a reverse pushup and couldn't. I haven't set foot in the weight room in the last 2 months. My 3 mile run time has dropped to below 18 minutes, I've lost a good 10 lbs and my body fat has dropped 4%. You can see the difference and God knows, I can feel the difference. I've introduced the rest of my squad to your program. Thanks for helping us kick ass and take names in a bellish and unforgiving manner.*

**D "Bubba" Byng - LCPL, USMC
"Golf" Co, MCS Battalion**

Matt Furey's *Combat Conditioning: Functional Exercises for Fitness & Combat Sports* has 48 super effective body-weight exercises along with seven different programs that will get you into kick-butt shape fast. Be one of the first 25 people to order and you'll receive 3 free **Special Reports** on how to eliminate knee, back and shoulder pain.

Your total investment in this no nonsense book is only \$29.95 plus \$6 S&H U.S. (foreign orders add \$12). Order online at www.mattfurey.com. Or pick up the phone right now and call 1 813 994 8267 to order.

You can also send a money order to Matt Furey Enterprises, Inc., 10339 Birdwatch Drive, Tampa, FL, 33647.

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COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

FARNAM'S GUNSLINGER DIARY ♦ BY JOHN FARNAM

Snipers And Riflemen: Backup And Retention



We noted these comments on snipers from a *New York Times* article, reprinted in the *Rocky Mountain News*:

"... As the counterinsurgency grinds into its ninth month, the Army is increasingly relying on snipers to protect infantry patrols sweeping through urban streets and alleyways, and to kill guerrilla leaders and disrupt their attacks. ... The demand for snipers is great enough that the Army has sent a team of trainers to Iraq to keep churning out new ones for the war effort here and in other hot spots. ... Most snipers are familiar with firearms even before joining the armed forces."

Lesson:

Generals and politicians decide, at the end of every war, that snipers, indeed all competent riflemen, are unnecessary and that what we really need are more death rays and other gadgets. As the next war arrives and goes on and on, they always reluctantly come to the conclusion that they were wrong all along and that competent trigger-pullers are not only important, but are indeed the only thing that really matters, or that ever has mattered.

In this world, there are people who need to be shot dead, not negotiated with, or have the error of their ways pointed out to them, but spontaneously shot to death — and the sooner the better. This is a frightful fact that even Army generals don't want to face or think about.

The U.S. Army is reluctantly admitting that there is currently a crucial shortage of competent trigger-pullers in the system! There is apparently no shortage of sensitivity counselors or leaflet distributors. They are even more embarrassed to admit that pricey death rays and innumerable other electronic gimmicks are not winning the war. Deadly rifle fire is.

Anyone who thinks that in the Twenty-First Century proficient riflemen and crucial rifle skills are obsolete is a naive fool. As always, skilled American riflemen, and the unique American gun culture that produces them, are winning this war, one dead bad guy at a time!

Murder Of An LED In OK

"Our trooper responded to a 'suspicious activity/person' call. As he arrived on the scene (by himself), he actually caught this suspect cooking meth. He placed the suspect

under arrest. The first handcuff went on. As our trooper attempted to put the second cuff on, the suspect began to resist violently.

"The fight went to the ground on the roadway and in the ditch. Both our trooper and the suspect were armed with Glock pistols. Our trooper had a G31. The suspect had a G22. Both the suspect and the officer drew pistols, but both pistols were subsequently knocked out of the grasp of both combatants.

"Groveling about on the ground, the suspect located the officer's G31, immediately stuck it in the trooper's face, and demanded the handcuff key. As our unarmed trooper begged for his life, the suspect shot him in the head twice.

"The trooper was dead at the scene.

"The suspect then fled to his sister's house where she and three others helped him remove the single handcuff. The suspect and his four 'helpers' (including his sister) were subsequently arrested without incident."

Lessons:

(1) Making arrests reasonably requires *at least two* officers, but this is not always possible, as one-man patrol cars are the rule rather than the exception. That being the case, all of us should be routinely carrying backup guns. A backup gun should be thought of as a necessity, not an option. The foregoing is a prime example of where a backup gun might have enabled this officer to come out alive.

(2) In addition, all of us need to regularly carry a serious blade that we can get into either hand quickly. A good blade has all kinds of uses, but first and foremost it can be used to cut a suspect's hands off your gun.

(3) Forcible disarms need to be learned and practiced regularly by all of us. When a pistol is stuck in your face, a violent disarm is usually the only viable option. I include retention and disarms in every Advanced Defensive Handgun class. It is a crucial skill. Once again, had this officer disarmed the suspect as the suspect pointed a gun at him, he might have come out of this incident alive.

Backup guns, blades, and disarms make the best "onion-field insurance."

John Farnam may be reached at JSFarnam@aol.com. ☒

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BY DR. MARTIN BRASS

AMERICA AT WAR

SOMEWHERE SOUTH OF THE EQUATOR AL QAEDA KILLER-FLEET LURKING, targeting global oil reserves. BRITISH NORTH SEA OIL RIGS and coastal refineries targeted by al Qaeda armada of two dozen ships suspected of carrying suicide bombers, explosives and WMD. OPERATION NOBLE EAGLE conducted by Royal Navy, hunt to intercept fleet of death: VALDEZ PORT in Prince William Sound, Alaska, another target in new terrorist-mission to destroy oil reserves and cripple West, shut down after threat. Terror vessels, dubbed Revolution, Struggle, Liberation, Patience and Holy War hide behind "flags of convenience" of Senegal, and Liberia, and Grenadines. Ships believed to have carried explosives used in U.S. embassy bombings in Africa and of Bali nightclub. *QUEEN MARY 2* believed to be target, possibly by submerged mines.

1. PHILIPPINES MAOIST NPA REPLACES MILF and Abu Sayyaf as number-one threat. Power plants and citizens attacked. GOAL: install Maoist communist dictatorship. Philippine military fortified by U.S. equipment, including helicopters, night attack aircraft, patrol boats and training; 150,000 dead in Muslim-Christian three-decade war.

3. THAILAND ATTACKS IN THE SOUTH organized by Gerakan Mujahideen Islam Pattani, with aid from Islamic radicals tied to al Qaeda.

2. COLOMBIA CAPTURED FARC LEADER Simon Trinidad interrogated by U.S./Colombian operatives. Apprehensive FARC leaders accuse U.S. intelligence of stalking.

4. FRANCE ROBOT SUBMARINE *ACHILLE* joins search for recorders from Egyptian plane Crash off Sharm el-Sheikh coast that killed 148. *Achille* equipped with video camera, can dive to 400 meters, has mechanical arms capable of recovering wreckage. Search to determine whether terrorism involved. SIX FLIGHTS between Paris and L.A. cancelled due to threats.

5. SWITZERLAND SWISS POLICE ARREST eight foreigners suspected of involvement in suicide bombings in Saudi Arabia.

6. RUSSIA COMMANDOS TAKE OUT 50, armed Chechen rebels hunted and destroyed — 36 rebels, nine border guards/civilians killed.

7. ITALY VATICAN TARGETED. Attack planned with hijacked plane on Christmas Day, Italian Premier Silvio Berlusconi warned, of "Precise and verified news ... hijacked plane into the Vatican an attack from the sky, is that clear?" Tight security thwarted attack.

8. GREAT BRITAIN FLIGHTS from London-Washington cancelled during holiday high alert.

9. BELGIUM EUROPEAN UNION CHIEFS targeted with seven letter bombs, two of which exploded. Members of the Informal Anarchist Federation (Communism without the bureaucracy) suspected.

13. IRAQ PRO-SADDAM resistance and al Qaeda link confirmed. Al Qaeda hired Iraqi fighters to smuggle and harbor terrorists. U.S. TROOPS develop tactics to counter ambushes attacking U.S. convoys. IEDs decrease — 250 in Nov, 200 in December.

14. AFGHANISTAN U.S. SPECIAL FORCES further empowered by new U.S. commander who is instituting aggressive anti-Taliban /al Qaeda policies

15. TURKEY KEY AIRBASE reopened for transfer of 120,000 U.S. troops.

16. EGYPT GOVERNMENT ATTEMPTS to convince Palestinian chiefs to cooperate with Israel's crackdown on terrorism.

17. ISRAEL U.S. SPECIAL FORCES and Israeli elite units regularly train and evaluate new Israeli techniques at Israel's Tactical Training Center. Israel rents facilities to other countries' elite units.

10. SAUDI ARABIA Saudi Government says at least 2,000 Saudi veterans of the Afghan holy war belong to Islamic radical groups within Saudi Arabia; A few hundred are openly at war with Saudi government.

CHAD, MALI, NIGER & MAURITANIA

U.S. ADVISERS provide training to stop terrorists crossing border from Algeria, an al Qaeda haven.

11. QATAR SADDAM HUSSEIN reportedly receives "the full coercive treatment," including hood, sleeplessness and lights by British MI6/CIA — "the Specialists"— inquisitors who broke Soviet spies and traitors during Cold War.

12. NIGERIA ISLAMIC RADICALS, numbering 200, targeted by police in northeast, seven killed.

18. NEPAL MAOIST REBELLION raging. Maoist rebels kill government officials and take charge. Mobile medical team targeted, to pressure rural population to join rebels.



Burning enemy vehicles to their front became so numerous, Johnson could no longer use the thermal sights on his Bradley, had to switch to day sights. (inset) Sergeant Mic checks around a burning Iraqi truck: There were no signs of life.

Last month Crazy Horse troop took Objective Floyd in the middle of a sandstorm and against staggering odds. With the burning hulks of uncounted enemy vehicles and armor acting as a beacon through darkness and blowing sand, it seemed as if all Iraqi forces in the area were moving on their position: JSTAR reported 40 T-72 tanks moving their way, the commander called with reports of upwards of a thousand trucks moving on their position — and as we left him last month, Staff Sergeant Dillard Johnson just got word from the Old Man that 20 BMPs were moving on him from the southeast.

Out-numbered 70-to-one but not out-gunned, Captain Jeff McCoy, like another famous cavalry commander George Armstrong Custer, was surrounded with nowhere to go. But McCoy was a battle master, moving Crazy Horse troop around to the best fighting position. McCoy placed himself in the center to command and control this winner-take-all chess match: Crazy Horse was in the eye of a shitstorm, and it was closing in on us fast.

Headquarters platoon started digging fighting positions and placing claymore antipersonnel mines. This task fell to First Lieutenant Keith B. Miller, our new troop XO. Miller is a third-generation soldier from Sumner, Washington, a happy-go-lucky guy that had just come over to the troop before we left for Kuwait. He would have his work cut out for him tonight.

Concurrently, McCoy was working on getting air support for us when three Iraqi soldiers came running out of the darkness at him. Specialist Stinson, his loader, had the Abrams' M240 machine gun protecting the left side of the tank and Sergeant Mihaucich (Mic) the tank's gunner, was firing his M240 into Iraqi soldiers that had made it across the canal and were attacking the front of the M1 with AK-47s. Mic cut these guys up in short order: Their uniforms were no match for the 7.62mm rounds that slammed into them at more than 400 rounds a minute.

McCoy grabbed the AK-47 I had given him earlier, aimed it at the Iraqis charging his side of the tank, and pulled the trigger. It was over in seconds. The AK-47 spit copper-jacketed lead into the three Iraqi soldiers, hitting the first one in the hip and stomach. As the AK climbed with every shot, the

CHARIOTS OF FIREPOWER

BY STAFF SGT. (P) DILLARD J. JOHNSON

PART 4

Crazy Horse Troop Overrun?

NOT ON MY WATCH!

second Iraqi got hit in the chest. It flipped him over and he hit the ground face first — dead as a doornail. The third poor bastard got hit in the neck and face. It took the top of his head off. The Russian-made AK had done its job keeping the heart of Crazy Horse alive.

The Line In The Sandstorm

Everyone in the troop was fighting hard to keep each other alive. The unit was fully engaged and the numbers were overwhelming. If it had not been for the leadership and cool-headed guidance of Capt. McCoy and First Sergeant Roy B. Griggs, Crazy Horse would have been lost. We were running out of time: This little spot in the middle of nowhere is where the Iraqis were going to make their big attack. But this was *not* going to be McCoy's last stand. My Bradley was in the best position I could get, blocking the only bridge. I moved Wild Wally up on my right side and had McAdams watch our right rear. There was nothing for me to do but wait: They would have to get through me to make it to the rest of the troop.

Staff Sergeant John Williams moved his Brad into the path of the oncoming T-72s. They would have to take out Williams to get to the rest of the troop. He was not going to let any tanks get by him even if the Iraqis destroyed his Bradley: It would still be blocking the road. Williams was set to die to protect the rest of us — Brave Heart had nothing on this guy.

So with visibility fewer than 15 meters, there he waited. Just down the road, Staff Sgt. Geary was in a firefight with 10

dismounts. The Iraqi soldiers had learned to use the wood line and had spent the night working their way to Geary's Brad. Using the night was their first mistake. The second was moving on Geary. He was still mad as hell and wanted payback. To say that these poor guys were going to die was an understatement. At less than 20 meters, Geary opened up with 25mm H.E. He was firing on single shot (the Bradley has three rates of fire: single shot, low rate and high rate). Sergeant First Class Christner had told us to fire on single shot to conserve ammo. The first Iraqi made a run at Geary's Brad. He was so close Geary had to fire in low magnification. One H.E. round and the Iraqi did not pass go nor did he collect 200 dollars. He went straight to hell — on fire I might add. Christner came over the radio net and reported to the commander that he had two Iraqi soldiers armed with AK-47s riding a donkey. That's right a donkey.

Christner fired tracers in front of the soldiers to see what they had in mind. When they turned his way and picked up the pace he knew. Christner waited till the very last second, then he opened up with his 240C machine gun, hitting both men in the chest. The donkey was still alive and wandering around the next day.

Staff Sergeant May was sitting next to Geary. After a lot of cross talk, they had worked the other nine dismounts into their crossfire. Less than 100 rounds later, the nine Iraqis lay dead. Not knowing if I could stop everything coming down on me, I planted some C4 on the bridge in front of me. As I



(above) The storm abates, daylight comes, and Sgt. 1st Class Broadhead kills a T-72 north of objective Floyd. (right) MTLB killed by Johnson's Bradley. Iraqi armor that advanced on their position was killed. Iraqi armor that was dug in was killed. Even Iraqi armor that was abandoned was killed as Crazy Horse moved north.

was hanging off the bridge, I dropped my demo bag in the canal — that was the last I saw of my Gerber multi-tool and my Cold Steel tomahawk, two indispensable tools.

It was getting late. The lack of sleep was getting to me. It was as if I were in slow motion, I had to concentrate very hard, on even the smallest task. As I stood there somewhere between awake and asleep, I heard the radio come alive: First Lieutenant McCormick, our fire support officer, came over the net and told everyone that we had air support, that we had aircraft stacked over us.

Air Support (On Paper)

We had air support, but they couldn't see the Iraqi army that was moving on us. The sand storm was bad — up to 300 feet high. So, once again, we were on our own. I looked in back and asked Sully if he was listening to the net. By the look in his eyes, I knew he had heard what was going on. I told Sully "I don't know if we are going to make it out of this. If you see a fireball in the turret don't worry about us, just get off and run to the closest farmhouse and stay there till daylight."

Not more than 10 minutes later I heard "CONTACT TANKS! LOTS OF TANKS!" It was Staff Sgt. Williams coming over the radio net with a contact report to the troop commander. Williams had T-72 tanks moving at him in the sandstorm. He did not have eyes on the tanks yet because the tanks were in the town, but he could hear them. McCoy was working the radio net for all it was worth, trying to get us something to support us. At last the Air Force gave us two B-1B bombers. McCoy had control of them. This was the first time any Army officer had ever had direct control of his own



B-1B bomber — let alone two. The B-1Bs could not see through the sand either, but they could drop their bombs where JSTAR told them that the enemy was. Things were starting to look up for us — then we were told that JAG would not let us bomb the tanks because they were in the little town that had been shooting at 3rd platoon all night. The Commander was told he could only drop the bombs on the tanks if they were firing on us. So we waited.

Williams could now see the tanks moving around the town, getting oh-so-close to him. Sergeant Hudgins, Williams' gunner, saw a T-72 heading at them. He opened up with 25mm. The tank had moved behind a house and was waiting for his wing-man to move on Williams' Bradley. Williams called the CO and told him that the tanks had his position and were trying to work him into a cross-fire. The commander tried to drop the bombs again: This time the B-1Bs started making their bombing runs. Williams had to move fast, as the bombs were coming in and he was in ground zero. Williams' Bradley was only 300 meters away

when the bombs started hitting the tanks. I was almost 2,500 meters away and I could feel the bombs hitting the ground, so I know it was rocking Williams' Bradley.

Twenty minutes after the last bomb had hit, Williams' moved back down to his last position to check out the battle damage. The sandstorm was as strong as ever, but you could still see the fires of the burning tanks in the town. The next day, the townspeople came up to Williams' Bradley, carrying pieces of the tanks. With the tanks burning to the east, Broadhead could now move back to me and help out with the troop trucks coming my way.

Iraqis: Lights Out — Truck: Lights On

The sandstorm was getting worse and you could only see 10 feet or so. Wally had just shot up a truckload of enemy soldiers that had made it to the bridge before we saw them. I had to get down on the ground to turn off the lights on the Iraqi truck. Moving to the truck, I saw one Iraqi soldier with an RPG launcher firing at my Brad. The rocket hit the driver's hatch and flipped up in the air and exploded over the bridge.

I fired my Beretta M9 9mm, hitting him in the arm and chest, then the pistol jammed. I went for an AK-47 I saw on the seat of the truck. As I bent down, the man's head exploded all over me. I looked behind me and saw Sgt. Mike Soprano less than two feet away. Mike was holding an AK-47. He grinned and said, "Here you go. It shoots a little high." Soprano had gotten off the Bradley to back me up and had moved to my right to get out of the lights of the truck. He had one of the more than a hundred AK-47s that we would pick up that day. As I turned the lights off on the truck, two more trucks came down the road. McAdams and his gunner, Sgt. Mulholland, had picked up the movement, and were watching to see if the truck was a troop transporter or some hapless farmer. The trucks stopped short of us and started unloading troops. So much for it being a farmer. Mulholland opened up with 25mm HE and the race was on.

They took off like a bat out of hell. Mulholland had the 25 mike-mike barking. The dismounts had moved to within 100 meters of us. However, out of the 30 or so that had charged us, only five or six were still alive. Mulholland took them out in the next 10 minutes.

Now that there were no AK-47 rounds zipping around me, I could get back on my Bradley (note to self: *Stay on the Bradley*). As I climbed back up on top of my Bradley, I checked for damage from the RPG round that had slammed into the driver's hatch. As I was looking at it, Specialist Jason



Broadhead's Abrams smokes a T-72. The T-72 may look good on paper to tin-pot dictators wanting to build an army of numbers, but they are no match for American armor and American fighting men. (below) Bradley goes by another burning T-72, north of Objective Floyd.

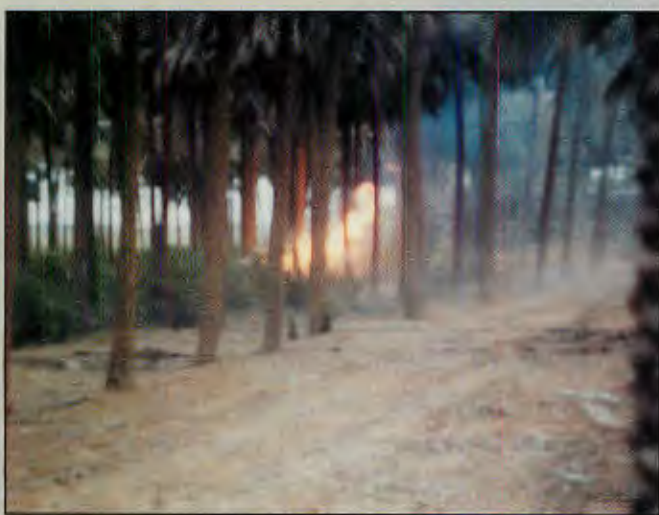


Sperry, my driver, opened up the driver's hatch and asked me what had hit the hatch, noting that whatever it was, it had bent the hatch-locking handle. Then I realized: I was looking at this poor kid who had been at the leading edge of the fight. What all had he seen coming at him? And how was he still able to drive this Bradley, knowing that everything they were throwing at us was hitting around his hatch? Yet still Sperry had kept going, even though he was not able to fire his weapon, as he had to put every thing he had into driving.

I was blessed with the best crew anyone could ask for. They were giving me all they had. I will never forget what my crew had done.

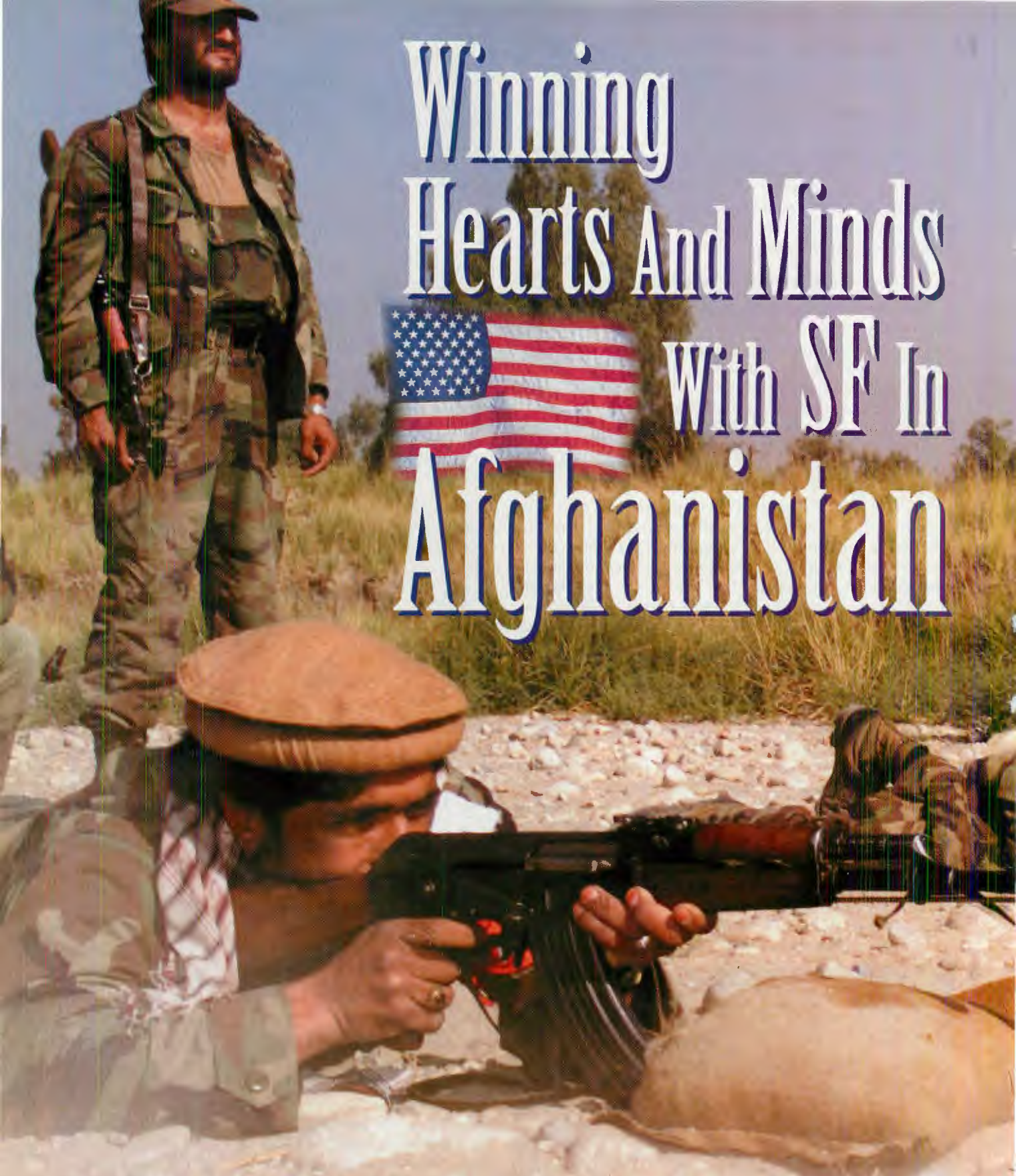
The sandstorm was moving back in on us and was bigger and badder than ever. Broadhead was moving his Abrams back to help me out with the troop truck convoy that was making its way to my position. You could not see ten feet in front of you. Broadhead could not find his way to me in the storm. I knew that we had Iraqi dismounts trying to find us, but I had to help Broadhead and Staff Sgt. May, his wing man, to see us, so I turned on my headlights for him to see how to get to us. When my lights came on, it looked just like hell. And right there next to my Brad were two Iraqi soldiers. The storm was so had they walked right by me and we did not see each other till then.

I pointed the AK-47 I had gotten from Soprano and held the trigger down till the magazine was empty. Two more sol-



Holed T-72 burns brightly behind "cover" of palm grove.

Continued on page 70



Winning Hearts And Minds With SF In Afghanistan

ODA 2025 is a National Guard Special Forces team made up of citizen-soldiers who spent seven months on the ground in eastern Afghanistan in 2002 and 2003. *SOF* has recounted the team's capture and destruction of arms caches and its ops against terrorist-aligned opium processing labs. But now *SOF* switches gears to show the other side of the universal wartime Green Beret mission — the commitment to win hearts and minds.



Staff Sergeant Dean, of ODA 2025, instructs soldiers of the team's MRF (Mobile Reaction Force) on the range, overwatching as the soldiers fire their AK-47s. The MRF is the ODA's hundred-man militia — trained, equipped and lead in battle by the ODA.

TEXT & PHOTOS BY PAUL AVALLONE

To see Special Forces depicted in a Hollywood movie, one would think it's all about brute physical superhuman studs firing a machine gun under one arm while launching a Stinger missile over the other shoulder, then taking on a platoon of zombie-like Ninja warriors with nothing more than bare fists and a sharp Kaybar, before climbing into the pilot's seat of an Apache or Harrier and flying the thing into the sunset.

The truth is, SF involves far less creaming the enemy a la Rambo than subtly outsmarting him, though it is that physical warfare that's most glamorous and plays best on movie screens and even in magazines such as this. Everyone wants to hear bang-bang, shoot-'em-up tales. "There I was, knee-deep in hand grenade pins" Those high-octane stories may very well be true for the opening stages of the Afghan war, but today the war is being fought and won by small

teams of SF quietly gaining the confidence, trust and allegiance of a 16th-century people who have for too long been preached to that we are the Great Satan.

Even though everyone knows that Rambo is a fiction, my guess would be that 97 of 100 guys showing up at Ft. Bragg for the SF Qualification Course, hoping to come out a year-and-a-half later a tabbed Green Beret, are imagining themselves as one day being one of those 5th Group guys we've all seen in the photographs riding into combat on horseback. One of the other two is there just because he heard of the great TDY per diem SF guys get for long deployments to the shitholes of the world. The last guy, he just got in the wrong line on the way to the PX.

Basically Teachers

Reality is, after the physical challenge of the SF



Assessment & Selection phase, 90 percent of the Q Course is mental; classroom learning designed to make “force-multipliers,” who are, basically, teachers. As dull as that sounds, that is the special mission of Special Forces: forming, training and leading foreign armies. In particular, in an unconventional warfare (UW) environment.

UW was the heart of SF at its inception and still is today. Along with its corollary, foreign internal defense (FID) — the training of foreign militaries. The Q Course is geared in the UW/FID direction, culminating in the famed Robin Sage guerrilla exercise, which is really a chess match between the students and guerrilla role players, not a clash of warriors on the battlefield.

But it is in the two other missions of SF — direct-action (DA) and special-reconnaissance (SR) — where the quick-draw, techno-thriller glamour lies. Army Rangers, Marine Recon, Navy Seals and Delta can all perform DA and SR missions, and I am willing to grant that most times, if not all, they can do them as good or better than SF. But UW and FID — the training and leading of foreign indigenous soldiers — that’s the province of SF alone.

Ironically enough, even as FID missions worldwide crowded SF’s plate from the Reagan mid-1980s right through the present, with the quick in-and-out wars of Grenada, Panama, Desert Storm and Somalia and in a stiff competition for military dollars and viability, SF tried to remake itself as a primarily DA, SR and Close-Quarters Battle (CQB) fighting force. SFAUC (SF Advanced Urban Combat) became the must-have course. Building-scaling, door-kicking, fast-roping and flash-banging. Delta stuff. Heck, stuff that any Ranger platoon can do and that any disciplined Marine infantry company can be taught.

UW? Post-Cold War, who needs it? FID? There’s no *hooah* in teaching. Just blackboards, flip-charts, cardboard and balsa wood training aids, range firing and pretend patrolling. The fun’s in riding the skids of a Little Bird, leaping off onto a rooftop, rappelling down the building side and swinging into a window, blasting away a life-size terrorist target with a customized carbine!

And Then Came Afghanistan

Those 5th Group guys on horseback didn’t get that way by parachuting in with them or galloping off Chinook ramps on them. The 12 men of ODA 595 inserted in the middle of the

(left) Staff Sergeant Dean of ODA 2025 watches soldiers of the team’s MRF (Mobile Reaction Force) perform basic rifle maintenance while practicing range-fire drills. The MRF are the hundred-man militia that the ODA trains, equips and leads in battle. (above) Sergeant First Class Laval conducts the Special Forces detachment’s MRF in daily physical training exercises.

night via an MH-47E helicopter (a 160th Special Ops Chinook) to link-up with the largest of the Northern Alliance’s armed factions, General Abdul Dostum’s force, to assist that 2,000-man army in breaking the years-long stalemate and defeat the Taliban. That Dostum’s army was a cavalry unit — literally, horse-mounted — had not been known before, but ODA 595 did what only SF is geared to do — they adapted, improvised and fit in; unconventional warfare. They guided Dostum’s faction of the Northern Alliance to a victory that had eluded it for years.

My team made it to Afghanistan about 10 months after 595’s famous ride. By then, the Taliban had been defeated and the U.S. had control of the entire country. It was a tenuous control at best. The remaining Taliban and their al Qaeda comrades had melted into the rural countryside or across the mountains into Pakistan. Were the U.S. to pack up and leave Afghanistan, the Taliban would be back, regrouped, to try and recapture control of the government.

Our job on the ground in Afghanistan was to find and root out whatever remained of the Taliban and al Qaeda and to



Master Sergeant Terry of ODA 2025 overwatches soldiers of the team’s Mobile Reaction Force as they zero their AK-47s on the range in mission prep.

keep those who'd found safe haven in Pakistan from coming back. A corollary was to uncover and take control of as much of the untold thousands of tons of arms and munitions cached and stockpiled by warlords, rival warlords, Taliban sympathizers, provincial governors, security chiefs, village mayors and everyone else, it seemed, along with his brother.

No small task for one little 10-man ODA in an area that covered more than 10,000 square kilometers, with the rugged mountains of the Paki border flanking the east and south. One ODA, remember, that did not have attached companies of Rangers, 82nd or 10th Mountain for combat support. Those infantry companies were in the country somewhere, we knew, but we never even thought it an option that we could call them, even in an emergency, and have them deploy rapidly to pull our asses out of a jam. We had an Air Force Tac-P attached for 24-hr on-call Close-Air Support (CAS). And we had a three-man Tactical Psyops Team (TPT) permanently attached, and they proved their worth as much as extra guns backing us as for their propaganda peddling. Also, sharing our fortress compounds was a dozen-man Civil Affairs team (a CAT) that — not for these Reservists' limited combat prowess but rather for their ability to assess the needs of the populace and subsequently get wells dug and schools built — helped create an atmosphere of hope, stability and progress for a people who had barely survived two decades of war.

An ODA, TPT and a CAT, that's it, working UW. In this case, the guerrillas could be said to be the Taliban and al Qaeda remnants and supporters just waiting for the opportunity strike at us, run us out of the area and reclaim it. This is Nangarhar Province we're talking about: an early Taliban stronghold and Osama bin Laden's home. Also to be viewed as potential guerrilla threats were the various local rival warlords who would love to optimize any chink in our armor to take the province over as their own.

Our Team Sergeant, Terry, used to love to say, with a smile and a shake of his head, "It's the Wild West meets the Mafia."



Guests of rural District Security Chief General Zariat Gul (far left), ODA 2025's Terry, Brian and Laval partake in a typical lunch of goat, chicken, rice and flat bread. Being the lone American military contingent in a great expanse of rural eastern Afghanistan, the ODA found it essential to build rapport, friendship and trust with the local Afghans upon which rested the ODA's success curtailing any Taliban or al Qaeda activities and build-up.

Meaning, the lawlessness of the Wild West and the ruthless, violent stranglehold of power the Mafia wields, all played out in a literal landscape of barren rocky deserts and mountains straight from a Hollywood western. And in this mix, Terry would add, with a wink, "And we're the sheriff."

As the sheriff, in true textbook UW fashion, our deputies and posse was our 100-man militia. Our MRF ("murf," for Mobile Reaction Force). They were the best soldiers culled from the local warlords' troops. Our own little army that we formed, fed, clothed, equipped, trained and led. It's not the stuff of glamour, but a videotape documentary could go a long way in the UW teaching phase of

the Q Course. The logistics alone of maintaining a hundred-man militia can be daunting. Lucky for us, the accounting and financial machinations fell upon our Senior Engineer, Chuck, who in his civilian life is an accountant. Even by Afghan standards, it takes many thousands of dollars a month to maintain such a militia, and since that money came from our command in Bagram, it had to be accounted for down to the penny. Again, not glamorous war stuff that makes for an action-packed thriller.

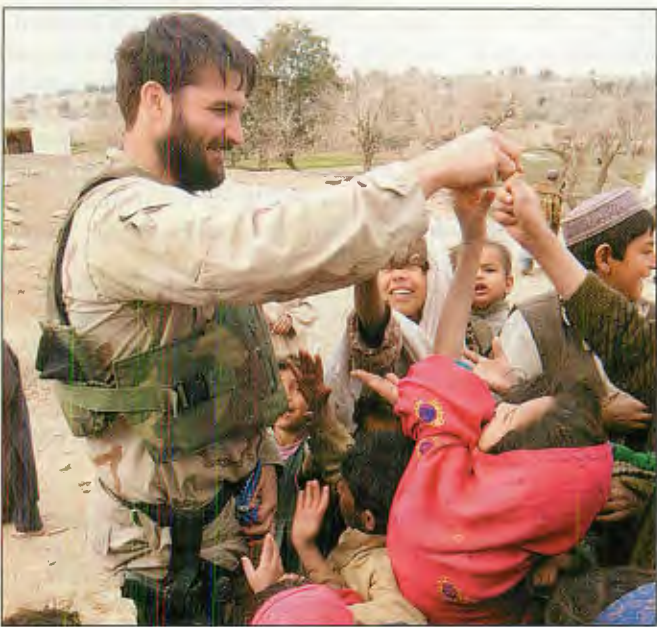
Neither is it all that interesting doing the mundane of instructing the MRF and helping establish a better, more secure compound. Constructing fortifications. Teaching and clearing fields of fire. Having latrines and showers built where before the soldiers shat in the open and bathed in the ditch. Spending hour after boring hour in the broiling sun on

(below, left) Sergeant First Class Laval, an 18D medical sergeant on the ODA, treats a bedridden Afghan man during the team's medical assessment at a refugee camp in eastern Afghanistan. In a land with so few doctors and fewer rural medical facilities — not even clinics — Afghans would come by the droves seeking medical care whenever we would set up a MedCap, impromptu or planned. (below) A little girl is a little tentative as Sgt. 1st Class Randy, a Special Forces medic with ODA 2025, checks her for what her father asserts is a congested chest during the team's medical evaluation in a rural village.





Getting into the spirit of Special Forces' winning hearts and minds, Air Force Chief John Harris, for a while attached to ODA 2025 as its Tac-P, gives Polaris rides to boys of a rural village in the heart of the Shin War Valley — a location famous for its poppy cultivation from which comes 60% of the European demand for heroin.



(above) Village children clamor around Sergeant First Class Randy for the candy he is giving out during the ODA's visit to this rural village in a strongly pro-Taliban area of eastern Afghanistan. 2025's Senior Weapons Sergeant Jason passes out toys and clothes collected by Mobile, Alabama friends and church members of Jason's wife, who mailed boxes and boxes of them to the team in Afghanistan to give to the needy children.

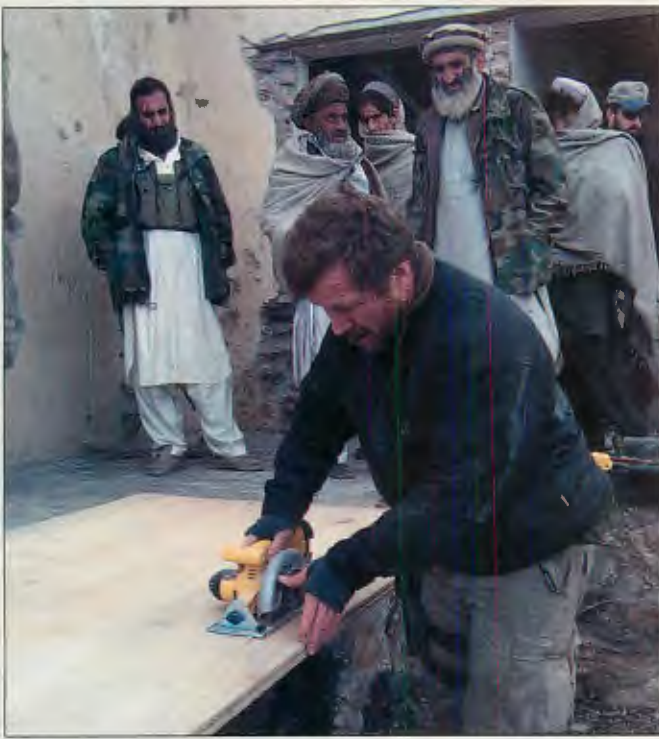


the range teaching basic rifle maintenance and marksmanship. As for Physical Training, no matter how many days you do it, it's always an hilarious sight watching a formation of Afghans doing jumping jacks. Flutter kicks? Synchronized? You're asking for a miracle. It might make for a good comedy bit in a movie, that's about it.

In a UW environment, it's not a company or a battalion or brigade of your fellow Americans with whom you live and fight; it's the locals, the "indig," (for indigenous populace). As such, you become a part of their lives. They are your fighters, and they're your friends. They respect you. They trust you. They feel responsible for your own safety. I witnessed it more than once that our own MRF soldiers would step in front of us when the rounds were coming our way, in their sense of obligation to protect us. Maybe because we drank chy with them, we ate with them, we laughed with them, and when they would gather to party we danced as they do, alone (women do not exist in any social setting), no matter how foolish we looked. Boil it down, and no matter that our culture, our education and our standards of living may be centuries more advanced than theirs, we treated them as equals as humans.

It's part of the flexibility built into the SF way. You're 10 or 12 men in the middle of nowhere — the Wild West. We may have been the *sheriffs* there, but without our deputies and posse, we would not have survived. In a like sense, without the allegiance and respect of the biggest, baddest warlord in the area, we would have been totally ineffective. In our case, that man was General Hazarat Ali. He had led his army for years as a faction of the Northern Alliance and had been the main ground unit utilized by SF during the Tora Bora hunt-for-Osama campaign in December 2001. Supported financially by the U.S., Ali was an ally in name, but it was our personal relationship with him — sitting down to numerous lunches with him, NCOs with the General — that helped bind us together that he allowed us to roam and operate at will in what everyone knows is "Ali country." Otherwise, it would have taken at minimum a heavy brigade of the 82nd to displace Ali. And worse, it would have taken that same brigade or more as an occupying force to provide the same area security Ali provided with his semi-rag-tag army. There is little that is more unfriendly to a people than a foreign occupying force. That's the quickest way to lose hearts and minds. Instead, in a UW situation, the single ODA working hand-in-hand with the indig commander (or guerrilla chief) could do the same without that dominating, intimidating conventional brigade. In a sense, General Ali was the guerrilla chief, and we were the single ODA.

Conventional warfare is fought and won with sheer physical power. In UW a single ODA cannot possibly wield that amount of power (except for its ability to call in CAS to do the killing) and succeeds by winning hearts and minds, however trite and worn-out that saying may be. To a certain extent, the proverb "When in Rome, do as the Romans" applies. If the operational culture deems a man without facial hair as "not a man," then you grow your mustaches and beards as much to respect the culture as to blend in. When the governor or a general or a rural mayor or just some humble village elder or your own MRF invite you to sit down and eat with them, you don't beg off to the safety of your own sanitized, pasteurized, bacteria-free American-supplied rations (from MREs to T-Rats to huge stockpiles of frozen lobster, steak and chicken, we were very well supplied by our command). You sit down on the floor (or ground) and eat with them, and your utensils are theirs — your hands into the same communal platters.



(above) Staff Sergeant Dean is a general contractor in the States, and it wasn't a surprise when he led the way getting the basic work to get this rural school made usable. (above, right) A school teacher in his civilian occupation, Captain Brian gives a quick lesson to school boys during one of the ODA's many presence patrols through rural eastern Afghanistan. (right) The school supplies sent from the U.S. from friends and relatives of the team.

And you get sick. Liquids-streaming-freely-from-all-orifices sick. What we called "pissing- outta-your-ass" sick, which is what literally you'd be doing for weeks on end. It happened to all of us. The cure: Cipro. We learned soon enough to cut it off at the pass before the liquid shits hit by making it ritual to pop a Cipro or two immediately after an Afghan meal and for the next couple of days following — and just put out of mind the possible long-term liver damage from such drug overuse.

With General Ali a U.S. ally and our team's working partner, we had physical control over the area, but that did not mean that we would automatically be liked and respected in the rural districts. This part of eastern Afghanistan had been fiercely pro-Taliban and had hosted al-Qaeda. In fact, Osama and his AQ had fled to and been protected by the villagers in the Tora Bora Mountains which border Pakistan to the south. With the people in the rural villages along the Tora Bora and the poppy-growing Shin War Valley distrustful, unfriendly and sometimes hostile to Americans, we knew that to gain their trust and allegiance meant first winning their hearts and minds.

To begin, we met with rural commanders, security chiefs and district governors to gain their understanding and support. They in turn would help arrange for us to conduct visits and meetings with the elders of the faraway, hostile villages, where we would go — armed, yes, and with a few squads of our MRF, but in peace and without threat. Most times, we brought along a couple of the Civil Affairs NCOs, who would do detailed assessments of the villages: population, agriculture, water sources, medical facilities, and the like. We would listen to the elders, who would often complain that "America never cared about us before, why should you now?" And, "What will America do for us?" In turn, we

stressed that we could listen and determine that they needed wells dug, they needed schools, they needed clinics, and that America could help make those resources available through our own military and through other worldwide relief agencies, from the UN on down, but the civilians of the agencies would not risk their lives coming to a hostile area, which is as the villages, being pro-Taliban, were viewed. The message was clear: Friendship and trust is a two-way street. The relief agencies would come with their aid if they believed the areas were secure and free of Taliban.

Numerous times we proved our own good intentions as representatives of America by providing very basic, immediate relief. In various villages we ran MedCaps, which is setting up a clinic for a day, having our own 18D medics see patients who, for the most part, had never been treated by a doctor. The Army provided lots of medicines for these missions, and we supplemented those with medicines we bought with our own money on the open market—a great deal purchased across the border in Pakistan for us by our troops. We helped some villagers reopen schools by performing repairs, building blackboards, providing school supplies like pencils, notebooks, readers, etc., and even covering the

Continued on page 76

COLD STEEL, HOT LEAD



This weathered piece of 500 steel plate shows the difference between .223 M193 ball (right) and M855 ball.

These Hardened Targets Give A New Ring To Shooting!

TEXT & PHOTOS BY
GARY PAUL JOHNSTON

Having grown up with guns, I also have some experience with targets of virtually all shapes, sizes and materials. While I have probably shot close to 100,000 paper targets in my life, the first targets I ever used were steel ones, for several reasons. They were readily available at no cost, they moved when hit, and they made noise — they were fun to shoot: They were the ubiquitous tin can.

Although I shot lots of cans with a .22 under supervision, I shot just as many unsupervised with several Daisy BB guns I owned, the oldest having been passed down to me by my uncle, which I still have. I also made targets from cans by cutting them out and nailing them onto the side of our barn, or hanging lids on string or wire that swung when hit. Even though these targets took hundreds of hits, they lasted for many years, and most were still hanging on that old barn when it was torn down many years later. Yes, steel targets can last almost forever.

It goes without saying that paper targets have an important role in shooting, as they can be easily scored in many types of competition and qualification, however, steel targets have greatly increased in popularity for many types of shooting sports and training. Back in the 1970s, I began using homemade steel knockdown targets to train my SWAT team.

Later we advanced to steel Pepper poppers and later to more realistic humanoid steel knockdown types, some of which I'm still using today.

“... As Velocity Goes Up, So Does Cost.”

Being available in several grades of toughness, steel targets are generally classed into two types — pistol and rifle, but there are also one or two in between. Cold rolled mild steel can withstand hundreds of thousands of rounds of standard velocity (<>800 fps) lead bullets. It's relatively inexpensive and is popular in Cowboy Action Shooting and other shooting sports. In addition to their hard copper skin, jacketed pistol bullets normally come with more velocity and will damage mild steel targets over a period of time, as will high velocity lead bullets. For this type of punishment harder steel, such as T1 is called for. However, as velocity goes up, so does cost.

For high-velocity jacketed rifle bullets, steel in the 500 series of brinell hardness is required, or better yet, true armor plate. This steel will stand up relatively well to most rifle bullets, except if fired at close range, but it will be damaged by armor-piercing bullets at any range. Armor-piercing bullets, or bullets with hardened steel penetrators such as M855 (SS109), will not only seriously damage steel targets,



Blackwater's Bell Target swings as it is hit with a round of .30-06 GI ball at 50 yards.



Only a tiny smear of metal results from the impact of a round of .30-06 GI Ball at 50 yards. No damage was done from 100 yards.

but can also be very dangerous as ricochets, and should be avoided for use on steel targets at all cost.

Speaking of ricochets, all bullets fired at steel targets ricochet, and this is why good eye-protection must be worn at all times. However, such ricochets usually splatter in 360 degrees off the target, especially lead bullets which actually liquefy. Jacketed rifle bullets do much the same thing, as do rifle bullets with cores of soft sintered iron. However, metal shards, or fragments from any bullet amount to shrapnel and its direction is never 100% predictable.

Although it is somewhat unlikely, the shards from high-velocity rifle bullets fired on steel targets inside of 100 yards could cause injury. Soft solid-lead bullets, on the other hand, are often fired at steel targets as close as 10 yards, but GOOD eye protection is always a must! I have experienced many

small cuts on my face over the years from bullet fragments, and I have friends who have suffered eye injuries. Standard eyeglasses are not sufficient. Special shooting glasses that wrap around to protect the sides of the eye sockets, or safety or tactical goggles are called for.

Torture Test

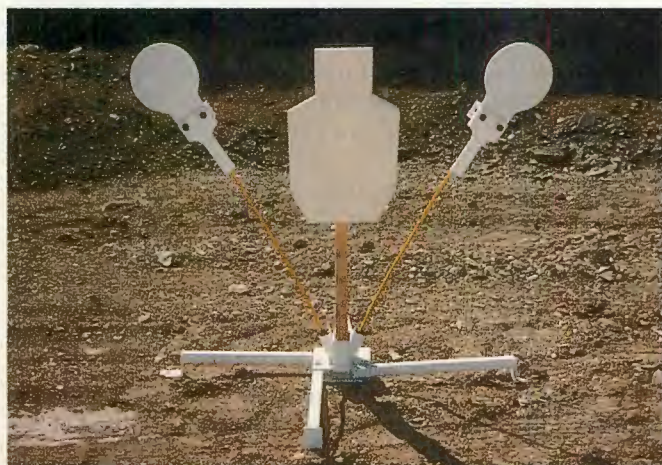
My friend, Gil Angelotti, has an almost unlimited supply of 5/16" steel plate that is used for heavy-duty industrial purposes. I don't know the brinell hardness of this steel, but it's close to 500. Gil has one piece on a swinger that has taken hundreds of rounds of .223 and .308 and has suffered only slight cratering at 25 yards. Using this target at 25 yards, Gil shot two rounds of .223 (5.56x45mm) at it, one a 55-grain 193 ball round and the other an M855 with a penetrator. The



MGM's swinging rifle target consists of a steel plate and two cardboard placards, one tan and the other orange. When hit, the plate causes the orange placard to rise above for visual verification. The



orange plate rises (above) as MGM's swinger pivots from a hit from 50 yards.



This MGM multiple steel target consists of a center silhouette with two paddles on flexible rods. When hit, the paddles become movers.



MGM's reduced steel popper can be used at close range to simulate long distance, and it resets itself.



Gil Angelotti fires a 7.62x39mm RPD light machinegun at a Metal Man "T" Target plate from 25 yards. (inset) The 7.62x39mm FMJ bullets did no discernable damage to the Metal Man "T" Target steel plate from 25 yards.

M193 bullet left a typical, very slight crater in the steel next to scores of others, but the M855 penetrator bored a hole 1/4-inch deep into the plate, pushing out a plug on the other side and almost going clear through. This is why you don't want to shoot even one round of M855/SS109 5.56mm, or any other AP, at steel plate of any kind.

With steel targets having become so popular during the past couple of decades, the number of companies specializing in them has also risen. As with everything else, the old adage

of "you get what you pay for," applies. We contacted some of the more notable suppliers of steel targets for the test samples seen here. Let's take a look at them.

Blackwater USA

Specializing in law-enforcement and military anti-terrorism measures, and well-known training facility, Blackwater USA now also offers a wide selection of rifle-grade steel targets. According to my friend, Gary Jackson, of Blackwater, the instructors there were unsatisfied with the steel targets that were available, so decided to have their own custom, steel targets made. Because these have been so well received, Blackwater now offers them for sale along with its new anti-terrorist, portable steel vehicle barricades. Relatively light and easy to transport and set up, these barricades will defeat virtually any vehicle and also put it out of commission, but let's talk about Blackwater's steel targets.

Like most steel targets, the exact formula of Blackwater's alloy is a guarded secret, but it is probably in the 500 series. Furnished in 3/8-inch thickness, these steel targets are offered in a wide variety of sizes, shapes, and systems. Our sample Blackwater steel target consisted of a bell-shaped long-range swinger, designed for use from 100 yards and beyond, with most high-power rifle bullets.

In testing this target at 25 yards, 50 yards, and 100 yards, we found that full-power .30-06 GI ball ammunition would

Porta Target consists of an angled steel plate on a steel stand. It will withstand .308 from 25 yards.





With its penetrator, 5.56mm M855 does serious damage to rifle-grade steel targets. Here a core of the plate was literally pushed part way out the back of the plate.



Flash Target mounts on the rear of any steel target, to emit a bright strobe flash when the steel is hit.

slightly pit the steel at 25 yards and less at 50 yards, but merely knocked-off paint at 100 yards and beyond. Even out to 300 yards, the target had an audible ring with hit, and swung for visible hit confirmation.

Gunsite Steel

Renowned for its state-of-the-art firearms training, Gunsite Academy has made its own steel targets for decades. Custom made from a proprietary 500-series steel, Gunsite's steel targets consist mainly of Pepper poppers in several thicknesses up to 1 inch, but other shapes and designs are available also including round and square plates. I've been shooting rifle-grade Gunsite steel targets for about 10 years, and, like its training, they're of the highest quality.

MGM Targets

Mike Gibson Mfg., of Idaho, also makes a wide variety of 3/8-inch rifle-grade steel targets using a proprietary steel alloy formula. We received three styles of targets from MGM including a multiple swinger, one that verified hits, and a reduced-size Pepper popper that automatically resets. With regard to bullet impact, these targets performed identically to the Blackwater target at all ranges. The reduced Pepper popper resets itself after being hit with a high-powered rifle bullet, and should last for many thousands of rounds with only repainting. The target that verified hits proved of particular interest in that, when struck, it swung to cause a bright orange placard to appear, verifying the hit in addition to the sound from the impact. However, at extended ranges, where the sound could be misleading, you can't miss the appearance of the orange placard.

The Metal Man

With extensive experience in precision steel laser-cutting, from artistic home and garden applications to industrial designs, this company also produces dozens of rifle-grade targets of 500 series steel. With a full line of standard and reactive steel targets, The

Metal Man offers targets for virtually all shooting disciplines and competition. For our tests, we received a sample of this company's new "T" target, a unique take-down, simple, mounting system. For ease of set-up and portability, this lightweight target proved ideal, and took hits from standard military rifle calibers as close as 25 yards with no damage to the plate.

Porta Targets

With a long-standing reputation, Porta Targets are often fired on by high-powered rifle cartridges from relatively close range without damage or high risk of injury from projectile shards. I have fired and witnessed hundreds of rounds of commercial .223 cal./5.56mm ammunition fired on these targets from 25 yards with no discernible damage to the steel. In our tests, the same results were achieved, except when GI M193 ball 5.56mm ammunition was fired from an M249 SAW. From this distance, these bullets left tiny pockmarks in the steel. From the same distance, the slightly slower 7.62x51mm NATO ball did no damage, and none of the rounds did any damage from 50 yards and beyond.

Flash Target

Along with our steel targets, we tested the Flash Target, designed and marketed by my friend, Larry Cohen, who originated the famous Steel Challenge competitive shoot. After sticking the Flash Target sensor to the back of a steel target using double-faced tape, the control module, with its bright white light, is placed up to 15 feet away, or farther with the new wireless version. When a rifle bullet hits the steel plate, the sensor causes the light to flash to verify the hit. Independently operated by two D-cell batteries, Flash Target can be used anywhere.

There are a number of other steel-target makers who also turn out high-quality, rifle-grade targets. I contacted a couple who were not interested in having their products tested, and there are others we simply don't know about. However, I can recommend those tested, as making first-rate products. ✕

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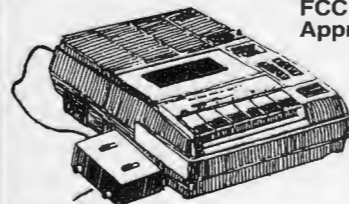
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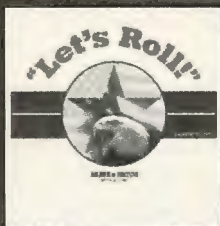
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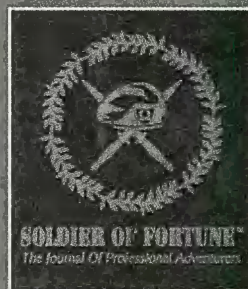


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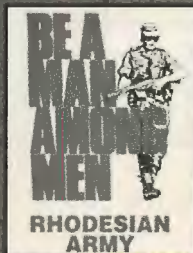
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*Wolf Performance Ammunition Offers
Something For Just About Everyone!*

BY GARY PAUL JOHNSTON

Here I was on the range at Gunsite Academy with a bunch of other shooters picking up brass after a day of shooting, when somebody said something about inventing a brass magnet. As I looked down at the ground, I replied that if we'd been shooting Wolf ammunition we could have used a standard magnet.

Among the voices that sounded in agreement, one stood out with the question, "Is that stuff any good?" Wincing from the pain in my back as I came to an erect posture, I answered, "Hell yes, it's good. I shoot it all the time." This was answered by somewhat of a weak challenge that, "some people had complained about it."

Where There's Smoke, There's Usually Fire

Yes, it's true. Some shooters have complained and continue to complain about Wolf Performance Ammunition with some of the warnings even coming from some who are very knowledgeable and highly respected in our industry. Why? Well, in the first place, I'm sure some of the reports are valid, and I have great respect for the negative news from those in the know. However, I wonder if many of the complaints could stem from Wolf Performance Ammunition being a "new kid on the block," or the fact that most of it comes from the former Soviet Union.

Generally I'm one who believes that where there's smoke, there's usually fire. If three or more people tell me there's something wrong with a product, I tend to take their word up front. Starting several years ago, I began to hear about various malfunctions occurring with the steel-cased ammunition marketed by Wolf.

The famous Tula Ammunition Company, of Russia, makes much of Wolf's ammunition, and some of it also comes from Germany. Most of it has been made using mild-steel cases that have been lacquer coated. To date, Wolf offers some 22 different calibers and gauges of ammunition in a variety of loadings. Foremost among these is the 7.62x39mm (M43) cartridge that Tula has been making for the former Soviet regime for the past 60 years. In addition to the 9x18mm Makarov round, others standard with the Russian military are 5.45x39mm and 7.62x54R. Along with the Makarov pistol calibers, they make .380 ACP, 9x19mm (Luger), .40 S&W and .45 ACP, and other rifle calibers have included .223 Rem., .30-06, and .22 Long Rifle.

Although I wouldn't expect problems with the Russian Military calibers, I figured the .223 Rem., and the Western pistol calibers could present a learning-curve situation, so we got some of these calibers to test along with some 7.62x39mm (M43). We fired the 9mm in a variety of auto pistols as well as the Colt 9mm SMG and the H&K MP5 SMG, and we fired the .40 S&W in S&W, Glock and Springfield XD pistols. The .45 ACP was fired in a couple of 1911 pistols and in a 1928 Thompson SMG. The .223 Rem. was fired in several M16 variations, an original AR-18, and a brand-new M249 SAW, and the 7.62x39mm was fired in an AK-47 and an RPD LMG. Oh, yes, and one of the .223 caliber M4s and a Colt 9mm SMG were suppressed by Gemtech. Suppressed weapons can pose a whole new set of functioning rules, but these continued to work without incident with Wolf Ammunition.

When It Doesn't Go Bang

I suppose we can group malfunctions, or failures, into three categories: Pilot error, weapon problems, and ammunition problems. For various reasons, let's disregard the human factor here and concentrate on the weapons and ammunition. I suppose our initial "test" included about 1,500 rounds altogether. Admittedly, it was a very informal test done over a period of time mainly out of curiosity. The only — ONLY — malfunctions that occurred with any of this Wolf ammo were from the .45 ACP round being fired in a Thompson. In this particular SMG, the Wolf .45 ACP just didn't have enough power to push the bolt all the way to the rear. The result was that when the trigger was released, the gun would continue to fire. All the other calibers performed flawlessly in all the other guns. What's more, any informal accuracy tests we did indicated that the ammunition was accurate on a level with most others of its type in similar guns.



The results of our tests sparked some amount of disbelief from those who had read otherwise on the Internet, but no one we knew had any problem with Wolf ammo other than an occasional malfunction. One friend attributed this to debris from the lacquer on the cases and sealant used on the primers.

Neither my partner, Gil Angelotti, nor I, knew anyone at Wolf. I merely called to request small quantities of their ammunition to test just like I regularly do with others in the industry, but now we found ourselves defending the stuff. We did, however, inform Wolf that their .45 ACP was too weak for the Thompson (and several other .45-caliber SMGs), and they said they were aware of the problem. They must have been, because their .45 ACP now seems to have sufficient power to work the SMGs. Wolf also acknowledged complaints about the primer sealant flaking off into the bolt face, and have reportedly changed this.

In the meantime, to further validate our own experiences, Gil purchased a fairly large quantity of Wolf Ammunition, mainly in .40 S&W, .45 ACP, 9mm, and .223 Rem., the latter for use in practice in preparation for and as reserve during a course he was planning to take. Since that time he and I have fired hundreds of rounds of .45 ACP and .40 S&W, and thousands of rounds of .223 and 7.62x39mm ammunition in a variety of firearms. It has all proven reliable and accurate in the pistols we have tested it in, except for occasional misfires in

Glock pistols. This is probably due to a combination of harder primers and a linear striker that has a shovel nose, as the problem has not occurred in other pistols. Some guns prove to be sensitive to certain ammunition types.

Recently, I spoke with the folks at Wolf Performance Ammunition and asked them for a sampling of more of their .223 and 7.62x39mm ammunition plus some of the other calibers they offer, for additional testing. These included .380 ACP, .30-06, 7.62x54R, and 20-ga. and 12-ga. loads, the latter including hunting, competition, tactical buckshot and slugs. After additional shooting our results were the same, and continued shooting has not produced any problems whatever.

Not being one who concentrates on the negative, I prefer to report on products that perform well. You know, "if you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all," so if something isn't very good, you probably won't read about it from me. However, I can tell you that I know of and have experienced



(left) Some of the calibers of Wolf Performance Ammunition tested are seen here. Wolf now offers nearly two-dozen calibers and variations. (above) One afternoon's shooting. This Gemtech suppressed Colt M4 Carbine has fired several thousand rounds of Wolf .223-caliber ammunition, with no malfunctions.

horrible results over the years from ammunition of some of the world's best makers. Most recently a young shooter practicing for a match had not one, but two .308 Match bullets lodge in the barrel of her rifle in a single week. This was factory-loaded ammunition, or should I say "unloaded" ammunition, because it apparently contained little or no powder. I'm not going to tell the name of this company, or any others whose ammunition I've had problems with, as I'm assuming they were isolated, but I did notify them.

Whatever the case, if you don't feel good about a product, don't use it. If you'd rather relegate Wolf Performance Ammunition for practice, that's up to you. I practice with a lot of it. All we can say is that thus far Wolf Ammunition has worked great for us and our associates.

New Wolf Ammunition

Oh, yes, and things are about to get even better. Not only has Wolf added .308 Winchester and .30 U.S. Carbine calibers to its line, but all Wolf Performance Ammunition will now use a new polymer coating instead of lacquer. Providing a gray matte finish, the polymer is also smoother than lacquer to give even better function. Finally, you really can easily pick up all your steel-cased Wolf empties with a magnet, but Wolf doesn't sell these. ☒

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GUNSITE'S 556 Advanced Carbine Course

BY BOB SHIMIZU

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Gunsite is located at 5,000 feet in the high Sonoran desert near Paulden, Arizona. It is perhaps the most famous shooting school of all time, and has trained elite military units, government agencies and private citizens in small-weapon-craft for more than 20 years. Gunsite offers three classes in the carbine — 223 (Carbine), 556 (Advanced Carbine) and CTP (Carbine Tactical Problems). The classes are offered in sequence, with each class a prerequisite for the next.

It was my curiosity about shooting the AR-15 in modern battle conditions that drove me to register with Gunsite for my 556 class. I wanted to explore my capabilities under conditions similar to those faced by our fighting people in the Middle East. Further, I would wear all the gear that our fighting people use. Finally, Gunsite's high-desert environment is close to conditions found in the Middle East. This was too much synchronicity to ignore.

Preparation

Assessing my abilities, I realized that I was woefully out-of-shape. So, in January 2003, I began swimming and running in preparation for my 556 class. In the process I dropped 30 pounds and hardened-up considerably. Towards the end of May, I was running 5-6 miles in the hills near my home, while carrying my AR-15. This was enough to convince me how strong our young soldiers are. It was all I could do to finish my course in light running gear. I don't think I could do it with a full combat load.

Learning To Optimize The Potential Of AR-15-Type Weapons



(right) Eric Olds at the Henneken Range shoots a pistol after transitioning from the carbine. This is part of Pat Roges' MEU(SOC) course of fire, which challenges the shooter to use both the carbine and the pistol. (right, middle) Bob S. shoots the outdoor simulator. Instructor Dan McNutt observes. (right, bottom) Former Marine Lt. Colonel Bill Go shoots the Scrambler, at Station #3 (of seven). The shooter has two chances to hit a target from each of seven stations, the most hits in the shortest time wins. Typical winning scores are less than a minute.

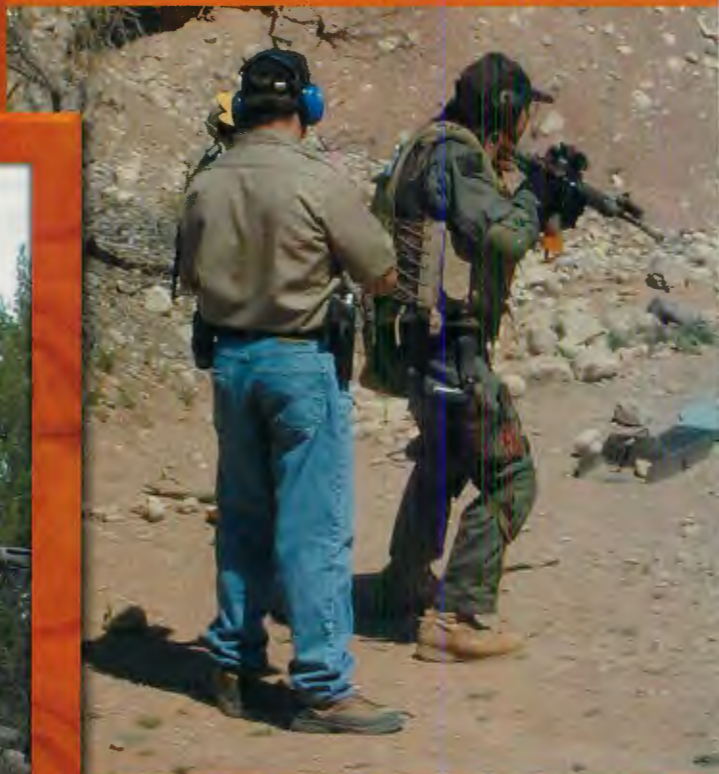
Gearing-Up

I wore a Nomex flight suit, Belleville boots, knee and elbow pads, Blackhawk SOLAG gloves, heavy web belt with dump pouch and Safariland 6004 drop-thigh holster, old GI body armor and a Morigan Versa-Tac vest. The vest carried six 30-round magazines, four pistol magazines, a spare flashlight, and a hybrid Platypus/Camelbak hydration device.

My rifle was a Colt AR-15 with a Mark Brown mount, an Aimpoint red-dot sight and a Surefire flashlight. I used a



Robert W. Shimizu



Jason Anso Hester of Guvkin



(above) Author Bob Shimizu at Stage #7 at the Scrambler. This is the last stage of the exercise, and because Bob has been running and shooting he has elected to use the Forced Respiratory Pause, wherein one clenches his gut, yielding a 3-to-5 second window to shoot in.



Robert W. Shimizu

After neutralizing a hostage-taker from outside the room, Eric Olds commits to the room in order to continue his search for threats.



Robert W. Schmeier

Boonie-Packer tactical sling, designed by Ken Hackathorn. My pistol was an excellent Rogers Precision government model in .45ACP.

With all this equipment fastened to me, I carried an additional 30 pounds of weight. Yes, it was cumbersome.

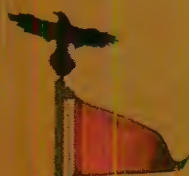
During the first five months of 2003 I trained repeatedly with this gear, getting used to the encumbrance and practicing my shooting. Initially, shooting with gloves was very difficult, but I acquired the skill through repetition. By May I had done all I could to prepare for the class.

The Class

On Monday, 19 May, I reported to Gunsite to begin my training. My Rangemaster was Pat Rogers, assisted by Ken Campbell and Dan McNutt.

Pat Rogers is a career Marine and NYPD Police Officer. Having served as a firearms trainer all over the world, Pat is as salty as they come. He is an energetic, dynamic teacher with a quick Irish wit and a no-nonsense military demeanor. Pat's rapid-fire New York speech and his level of enthusiasm is a great motivator.

Ken Campbell is Captain of the Boone County, Indiana, Police Force. Ken is the training officer for his department



Army Hillier of Gunsite



Yavapai County Sheriff's Deputy Hal Wachter neutralizes a bad guy after carefully checking a corner.

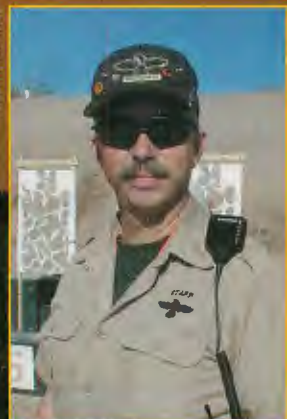


Robert W. Schmeier

In preparation for this class, I took several cans of Krylon paint to my prized AR-15 to lower its visual profile. I then immortalized it in the accompanying photo.



Robert W. Schmeier



Rangemaster Pat Rogers

Instructor Ken Campbell

and leader of that county's SWAT Team. He is an extremely knowledgeable and supportive instructor. Ken and Pat are fixtures at Gunsite, and spend a good deal of their spare time teaching at the school.

Dan McNutt served as a Captain in the USMC, and is now an attorney in the southwest. His capable instruction and keen observation skills help him to find and fix problems that shooters don't know they have. He is a very good instructor.

These men were some of the best. They had to be, because the class of 14 included four Gunsite instructors. In addition to these, we had two medical professionals, a retired USMC lieutenant colonel, the Editor of SWAT Magazine, several law-enforcement officers, an unusually intelligent and self-possessed young lady and a computer geek — myself. It was a tough crowd of experienced, able shooters. I would have my hands full trying to keep up.

We spent Day One reviewing skills learned during our prior 223 classes. We shot from prone, intermediate and



Before my 556 class, I mounted the rifle in the classic off-hand style, with my firing-side elbow held parallel to the deck, creating a “pocket” for the buttstock. My support-side hand cradled the forestock, applying no pressure. This is an accurate position, but it can expose the firing-side elbow to incoming fire, especially in barricade positions.

Pat Rogers showed me this technique: While pulling the rifle back firmly into the shoulder, pull both elbows down and rotate them inboard, creating a twisting effect as if you are trying to twist the rifle along its major axis. If you have no vertical foregrip, you grasp the front of the magazine well instead. This sub-machine gun technique works very well for the AR-15-style weapon.

standing positions at various ranges from 50 yards down to 3 yards. We practiced malfunction clearances, and tactical and speed reloads. We practiced transitions to the pistol. We shot precise groups at 50 yards and quick shots at contact distance.

Throughout the day, the instructors kept the pace up, asking faster and faster times of us. While they walked the line, they observed our individual skills, trying to find what each student needed in order to improve.

At the end of the first day we'd had a workout, but each of us was tuned up and ready for new material. It was all I could do to drag myself home, clean my guns, eat dinner and fall gratefully into bed! Imagine how I'd have felt if I wasn't in shape!

On Day Two, we worked in the morning on the “square range,” practicing our intermediate positions. We shot from non-standard positions as we kept cover while directing effective fire to the targets. We then split into two groups and moved out to our first simulator runs.

Pretending The Real World

In a Gunsite simulator, one is put in an indoor or outdoor environment and presented with a variety of targets that he or she is to find and neutralize. Good tactics are a combination of method and art. Our instructors evaluated our skills carefully. If we led into an area with the muzzle, or exposed ourselves to a target unknowingly, we received constructive criticism. There would be 10 simulator runs during the class.



To hammer home a point, Pat Rogers gets the class to acknowledge his wisdom by saying loudly, “Yes, Pat!” Anticipating this, I had patches made up that said “Yes, Pat!” and distributed them to the group — all we had to do was point to our backs to convey our understanding. Here's Pat with some students acknowledging a point.

By the end of day two, our class began to come together as a unit. High-fives were exchanged over good targets, and good-natured teasing over poor ones. I received a brotherly admonition from classmate Erick Gelhaus, who saw me suffering in my body armor. He convinced me to use the armor only in the mornings, for his own people train that way. Erick didn't want me falling over with heatstroke while holding a hot weapon.

Our first exercises on Thursday were two Simunitions scenarios. Simunitions are real guns modified to shoot only detergent pellets that travel at 400 fps. With face and neck protection, we would experience scenarios with real adversaries who would shoot us if we did something stupid. We were issued a Simunitions carbine and pistol and sent off to our destinies. Dan McNutt was my observer for the first scenario.

In the outdoor scenario, I began seated in a van. When the scenario began, two guys got out of other vehicles, taking cover and directing their attention to a school bus. There was a mannequin lying on the ground outside the bus. Clearly, I was witnessing a deadly force situation.

I exited on the opposite side of the vehicle, grabbing my carbine, and taking cover behind the engine block. Soon, the two strangers exchanged words and one of them charged past me as I tracked him with the AR-15. Dan confirmed that this person had left the scenario, so I turned my attention to the remaining stranger. Within a few seconds, this individual approached my vehicle, becoming confrontational. I backed around the van to keep some cover. He refused my demands for him to drop his weapon. Finally, I raised my carbine only to hear “CLICK” as the hammer dropped on an empty chamber! In the fastest two seconds of my life I dumped the useless carbine and transitioned to the pistol, whereupon the bad guy and I traded shots. “Marshmallow!” shouted Dan, concluding the scenario.

In the indoor Simunitions exercise, I was confronted with a madman loose in an elementary school. While approaching the building I heard a shot fired from within. I opened the front door and stood back to clear what I could see. I caught a momentary flash of a human leaving the room — a non-specific threat.

Clearing the room I tried to take a barricaded position, but Ken Campbell urged me to leave my cover. “People are dying right now, Bob. You have to go to the threat.” I moved to the next hallway. Entering a confined space, I let the carbine hang, and presented my handgun. I peered around the corner.

There stood the bad guy with a knife to the throat of an elementary school student. There was no time for a head-

Continued on page 74

THE NEW 6.8 MM

PART II

TEXT & PHOTOS BY
GARY PAUL JOHNSTON

Last month, Johnston detailed the streamlined development team that brought this dramatic new development to the fore, and this month continues with detailed testing of the round and coverage of the weapons that will shoot it, their accessories and components.

Along with the 6.8mm SPC's safe pressure and a high load-density, the Project Leader insisted that its propellant have an organic flash retardant. While this might seem a no-brainer, most military powders have no low-flash requirement. Although this may not affect Special Operations soldiers with sound suppressors, the regular Light Infantry, the "Lightfighters," have no suppressed weapons to reduce muzzle flash and blast. The 6.8mm would provide the average soldier with a low flash-signature capability along with its other attributes, to help insure our troops better survivability in the GWOT.

The project leader also insisted that the 6.8mm brass casing be of the highest quality with the O.A.L., neck, primer pocket, and all other aspects maintaining the strictest con-

sistency. This requirement has also been met by Remington.

As currently loaded, the 115-gr. Hornady bullet used in the new 6.8x43mm SPC has a ballistic coefficient of 0.360, and has flight characteristics identical to those of the 7.62x51mm NATO (.308/147 gr.) round at all ranges from 0-500m, and at 600 meters it shoots 4 inches low. All standard sniper scopes with 7.62mm NATO elevation cams can be used with the 6.8mm with only a minor hold-over at 600m. In addition, the 6.8mm Hornady bullet produces 1 MOA accuracy at all ranges, and demonstrates improved incapacitation equal to or better than the 7.62mm Match projectile. Just as important is that the 6.8mm's reduced recoil allows the operator to see his hits on the target and make faster follow-up shots if necessary. Although not optimal or required for purpose, 6.8mm REM SPC hits on steel targets have been achieved with a Trijicon ACOG 4X Day Sight out to 800 yards.

The SF Project Leader made it clear that he could not take full credit for the incredible performance that the 6.8mm SPC has shown to date. It has far exceeded the desired 100 fps increase over the 7.62x39mm round used in the AK-47.



The final cartridge performance parameters he pushed for were based on many years of experience and learning from the writings of JSSAP's Bob McCoy, Mr. P.O. Ackley, Rick Jamison, John Barsness, Mic McPherson, Dave Scovill and the many contributors to *Precision Shooting Magazine* and others too numerous to mention.

The Mk-12 Recce Rifle

Along with the development of the 6.8mm Rem SPC cartridge was a new upper-receiver component to fire it, and confronting this was a number of problems common to the M4 Carbine. Having evolved from the XM177E2 and CAR-15 weapons of the Vietnam era, the M4 Carbine retains the "shorty" handguards and gas tube of those carbines. Without revisiting the technical problems plaguing the M4 Carbine, its gas pressure curve, dwell time, bolt velocity, and heat build-up make extraction and overall reliability tenuous under severe battlefield conditions. While some remedies have proved fairly effective in curing reliability issues, they are not seen as long-term solutions.

The conceptual 6.8mm REM SPC Mk-12 Mod 0 Sniper Rifle has proven accurate well beyond its 600-meter requirement, and should prove equally effective on the battlefields of the Global War on Terrorism. (inset) The 6.8mm REM SPC: Compared to existing rounds with similar missions, such as the 5.56 NATO, 5.45 and 7.62mm X 39 Soviet rounds, it outguns them all.

What is likely a key to the basic problem of the M4 is the placement of the gas port/front sight base that is roughly 4 inches closer to the chamber than on the standard M16 rifle. A logical solution came from Mr. Mark Westrom, of Armalite Corporation, in Illinois. Seeing potential problems in the "shorty" M16 gas system, Westrom developed what he calls the Mid-Length Carbine where the gas port is extended forward to a scientifically determined "sweet spot" about midway between that of the M4 and the M16 rifle. Working closely with the USAMU, Mark Westrom allowed the use of his design in order to help the user-driven project along, knowing that the soldiers did not have a lot of funding.



Here the 6.8mm Mk-12 Variant "Recce" Rifle is seen from the left side with Mk-12 SOPMOD suppressor mounted and pop-up open sights deployed. The "Recce" is equipped with the new A.R.M.S. Mid-Length S.I.R. System.

While its official designation is the Mk-12 Variant, the new component is assembled onto the existing Mk 12 M16 (M4) lower receiver group, and is unofficially referred to by the troops as the Recce rifle (Recce being short for recon and pronounced "recky"). This name originated with British Commandos and now stems from the influence of the NAVSPECWARCOM (Navy Special Warfare Command) where there is much interest in the 6.8mm capability in a Recce configuration.

Using a special 16.5" match-grade, stainless-steel 6.8mm barrel from Rock Creek Barrels, Inc., of Albany, Wisconsin, and PAC-NOR Barrels, the 6.8mm Rem SPC Recce rifle oper-

ational review variant is also fitted with an adapter and combination mount/muzzle brake like that used with the Mk-12 SPR. This mount will accept a 6.8mm conversion of SOCOM's Special Operations Peculiar Modification (SOPMOD) Mk12 SPR Sound Suppressor made by OPS, Inc., of California. As on the 5.56mm SPR, Precision Reflex's M-84 gas-blocking charging handle will also be standard equipment. With its lower velocity and increased bore size, the 6.8mm should have superior barrel life and less wear and tear on the rifle than the 5.56mm M4 Carbine, with the latter's 900-925 rpm cyclic rate and high-velocity projectile that ruins a bore after one season of firing.

A New Magazine

In addition to a slightly enlarged bolt face, the Recce rifle will be issued with a new magazine. Although the 6.8mm Rem SPC round has the same OAL as the 5.56x45mm, it is wider, and physical dimension changes required COTS magazine modifications. To satisfy these needs, Precision Reflex, Inc., of New Bremen, Ohio (PRI), slightly modified its COTS steel 7.62x39mm magazine for the AR-15 to work with the 6.8mm Rem SPC. Resembling a 30-round M16 magazine, the 6.8mm magazine was adapted to hold 28 rounds of ammunition and still fit in the M16. Other rifles that are compatible with the 6.8mm include the HK G36 and XM8, Armalite AR-180B, Knight Armament SR-15, Robinson RAV-2000, IMI TR-21, FNC, F2000, CIS SAR-21, SIG 552 and Steyr AUG. Any 5.56mm rifle that uses the M16 magazine latch and release can use the new 6.8mm magazine without alteration. By the way, the AUG may soon be made in the USA and Steyr is looking into the 6.8mm as this is written, and word has it that the 6.8mm is already being tested in the SIG 552 and the HK G36C and G36K.

A fraction of an inch longer at the lower rear than the M16 magazine, the new 6.8mm magazine will fit all existing assault vests including SPEAR



(above) The 6.8mm REM SPC conceptual Mk-12 Mod 0 SPR is seen with both the Mk-12 SOPMOD suppressor and Leupold TS-30A2 Sniper Scope mounted along with a box of 6.8mm Remington SPC ammunition. (below) Developed exclusively for the U.S. Military, the Leupold TS-30A2 Sniper Scope is mounted in a pair of A.R.M.S. medium height 30mm ThrowLever Rings. Leupold will soon market a civilian version identical except for its designation.





(above) Shown here are the 6.8mm SPR's best 100-yard 3-shot groups using Sierra bullets (left) and Hornady bullets. (below) The propellant used in the new 6.8mm REM SPC round has an organic flash retardant — very effective, as shown in this night shot.



BALCS and MOLLE magazine pouches. This is significant in that combat operators practice loading of only 28 rounds of M855 5.56mm ammunition in current M16 30-round magazines in order to be able to seat the magazine with the bolt closed, and prevent malfunctions. The 6.8mm therefore provides greater combat incapacitation while equaling ammunition capacity. However, standard M16 magazines can also be used with the 6.8mm cartridge to hold 25 rounds.

Instead of the standard M16 front sight base/gas block being positioned mid-length on the barrel, PRI's Flip Up SPR front sight will be used. The Recce rifle will also be issued with the A.R.M.S. new Mid-Length S.I.R. System and #40 Flip-Up rear sight, but is also capable of using most COTS handguard tubes like the KAC tube used on the SPR Mk-12 Mod 1.

Testing The 6.8mm Rem SPC

Recently I received three 6.8mm Rem SPC complete upper receiver components from PRI for testing and evaluation. One was a Recce clone with a 16.5 inch barrel with a mid-length gas block/front sight and A.R.M.S. Mid-Length S.I.R. System, one was the alternate 16.5 inch mid-length with the PRI GENIII Intermediate Forearm, and one was a conceptual 6.8mm variant of the SOCOM SPR Mk-12 with an 18.5- inch barrel. The SPR had a mid-length gas block, and a separate PRI Flip-Up front sight mounted in the standard (full-length position). This combination would provide optimum cartridge performance to 600m, improved iron sight-radius, and a better pressure curve and dwell time. Along with the bolt groups, the upper receivers on these units were made by Lewis Machine & Tool, of Milan, Illinois.

A Leupold TS-30A2 (Tactical Scope, 30mm type A2) Mk-12 SPR scope was mounted on the 6.8mm components for the tests. This superb scope is an improved version of the TS-30 that was designed and built expressly for the Army after 9-11 in order to get the 150 SPR rifles into the

6.8mm REM SPC

SPECIFICATIONS

Parent Case: .30 Remington

Bullet: Hornady .277 (.270) 115-gr. Open Point Boattail Match

Ballistic Coefficient: .360

b 2.25"

Case Length: 43mm (1.69")

b .422"

Primer: Large Rifle

Propellant: Classified

Charge: Classified

Operating Pressure: 51,000 + - psi.

Muzzle Velocity: 2,625 + - fps. (16.5 bbl.)

field in Afghanistan.

A 3-9x42mm scope, the TS-30A2 comes with a Mil Dot reticle that can be illuminated bright red, with a multi-position turret for various degrees of brightness. Although the TS30A2 was made exclusively for the Army, an identical scope will be introduced by Leupold in early 2004 that will be available to law enforcement and the public. Called the MRT, the new scope will differ only in its designation.

With a small quantity of Remington factory loaded

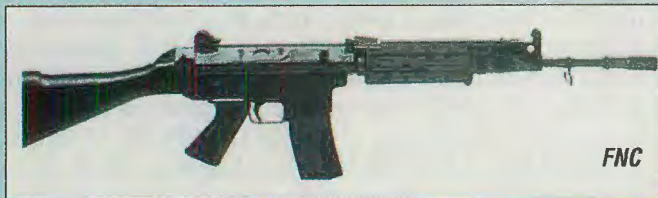
6.8x43mm ammunition, I began testing two of the 6.8mm components. These were the SPR and the Recce Rifle with the A.R.M.S. Mid-Length S.I.R. System. For informal shooting, an Aimpoint Comp M2 was mounted on the 16.5-inch Recce Rifle. This included close-quarter battle (CQB) firing drills in addition to full automatic burst fire. Only 27 rounds of 6.8mm ammunition could be loaded into our pre-produc-

Continued on page 77

Typical of the 5.56mm assault rifles that are compatible with the 6.8mm REM SPC are the Armalite AR-180B (not pictured here), CIS SAR-21, FNC, F2000, HK G36K, HKG36C, HK XM8, IMI TR-21, Knight Armament SR-15, Robinson RAV-2000, SIG 552 and Steyr AUG. Photos: courtesy author's files



CIS SAR-21



FNC



F2000



HK G36K



HK XM8



IMI TR-21



Knight Armament SR-15



Robinson RAV-2000



SIG 552



Steyr AUG

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9 Out of The 10 Voices In My Head Told Me To Stay Home and Clean My Guns Today Item #304

sniper Item #114

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I AM THE WEAPON My Arms and Gills Are A Only Tools Item # 181

I Only Do What The Voices In My Head Tell ME! Item #179

Those Who Live By The Sword Get Shot By Those Who Don't Item #337

GREEN BERET BACK Item #177

CHRISTIAN AMERICAN HETEROSEXUAL PRO-GUN CONSERVATIVE Any Questions? Item #122

Don't Fear The Night... Fear What Hunts at Night Item #129

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BOMB SQUAD IF YOU SEE ME RUNNING... YOU BETTER CATCH UP! Item #133

BOMB SQUAD Item #133

US MARINES Item #162

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Continued from page 41

diers were dead. How long would they keep coming at us with no hope of winning? Broadhead came over the radio net and said he could see me. I told Broadhead that I had found some good firing positions for his tanks to set up. The sandstorm was so bad that when he moved to set up in the fighting position, he overshot them and got high-centered. Broadhead was dismounting his tank when he fell face-first in the dirt, hitting his knee on a big rock. He could barely walk for the next two weeks. After a rather intense radio call between Broadhead and myself, I was able to get him in the right position, just in time for the sandstorm to stop and open the night up to us.

The Storm Lifts, Temporarily

We could now see more than 1,000 meters. That was not a good thing for a platoon of Iraqis that had been working their way to Geary and Crawford's position. The sandstorm's stopping left them hanging out in the open. It didn't take a long time for them to make the last moves of their lives, and as most Iraqi soldiers had done, they tried to run away. It didn't work. They were gunned-down by the 25mm main gun of the Bradley. It is very unforgiving. With the sand gone now, I could see that we had about 25 troop trucks in front of us, on fire. I called Broadhead over the radio net and told him that I was going to move across the canal bridge and that I needed him to move with me and set up over watch while I did a recon to check BDA (battle damage assessment), for the commander to call up to higher command.

Night-Fighters Win

When we moved across the bridge, we ran into a lot of Iraqi soldiers that had been hiding behind the burning trucks. Sergeant Bobby Hull and Sgt. Mike Soprano, our gunners, opened-up on them with 7.62mm coax machine guns. Just like on the training ranges back at Ft. Stewart, they fired 15-to 20-round bursts in a Z pattern. It worked very well as we moved up the road, with no one having time to return fire at us. As Hull killed the last of the dismounts that we could see, my gunner told me he thought he had a BMP in front of me. I dropped down inside the turret and looked in the sight. I could tell that it did not have tracks on it, but it was armored. I called Broadhead and told him to look, but I was in his line of sight. I gave Mike my fire command "AP THREE ROUNDS FIRE!" The round on the face of the bolt was HE so it hit short but the other two AP rounds hit it in the front. I told Mike "You're on target: Smoke it." He let out another burst of AP, and this time there was a small fire then one big explosion. I still didn't know what it was, so I moved closer to get a better look: I was in a firefight with a BRDM.

The night-fighting ability of the Bradley had won that battle hands down. I was feeling pretty good about my Brad when from behind the BRDM came a truck. Before I could get

my gun on it, Broadhead hit it with a 120mm main-gun round from his M1. The truck was no more. I took that as my signal to move on back with Broadhead.

Fat Lady? What Fat Lady?

I moved back and set up next to Broadhead's M1. I was looking to the south at the wood line, where I had been told that there were BMPs moving my way. Broadhead was taking on truck after truck. Meanwhile, 3rd Platoon had a fight of their own going on. Staff Sgt. Wasson and his gunner Sgt. Raab were up to their ass in enemy dismounts. Wasson had been hit in the back by an RPG and was hurting. Raab was firing into a group of maybe 20 dismounts.

All of this had taken place in less than two hours. The thermal sight on my Brad was no longer any good to me — we had too much stuff on fire in front of us. I had my gunner go to day sight, as everything was all lit up any way. I called the commander and asked if he had any aircraft for me yet, as the sandstorm was moving back in on us. Lucky for us he did, and just in time, too. To my south I was picking up movement from BMPs — a lot of them — 20 or more were moving in on us. I gave the commander the grid where they were, then we watched as four 2,000-pounders landed right on top of them. The Air Force dropped them in a line right down the road where the BMPs were moving. I don't know how many they hit but there was a lot of stuff on fire over there, and no more movement. The road in front of Broadhead and me was full of burning trucks.

Every new truck that came down the road, would drive around the burning trucks, using them for cover to get closer to us. Then the trucks stopped coming around the burning ones. Instead they stopped and let their troops out, and the Iraqi soldiers moved up to us in the ditches. One minute there was nothing and the next we had a shitload of guys shooting at us. I called for an airstrike on the road just behind the trucks. The Air Force had B-1B bombers en route, and we needed to move now to get out of the area. I told my driver to back up. He had forgot that he left the Bradley in drive when he gave it gas. We went off the road into a deep ditch. It was as close as we could get without turning over.

I called Broadhead and told him I needed him to help pull me out, that I couldn't use my Brad's power because we would surely turn over. Broadhead pulled his tank up to the back of my Bradley and he and I tried to hook up the tow cable to my Brad. The ground fire was getting heavy. I was shot through my pants almost hitting me in the calf. We had more than 100 dismounts firing at us, two B-1B bombers coming to drop bombs where we were, and Broadhead and I were stuck behind my Bradley with nowhere to go.

In this war, the worst thing about "Friendly" fire was that it was more accurate. Next month Crazy Horse survives American ordnance, and manages to disengage from overwhelming numbers of Iraqis by killing everything in sight — then continues its assault on Baghdad. ☒



The superior numbers meant nothing in battle: Iraqi armor vehicles, tactics, training simply couldn't cut it.

Out Of The Shadows

Continued from page 32

a man who President Clinton authorized numerous operations to get. This is not the only one we tried to do. And since we're still trying to get him. I think its better not to get into too many details ... It was just simply that when the final, go, no-go, decision comes, you need to make sure that the information is there to justify moving. And in this case, unfortunately, it was not. No one wants to conduct an operation that you know in advance is going to be a failure if the target's not in your cross hairs. In this case, I think what it demonstrates is the commitment of President Clinton to do everything possible to get Mughniyah."

If there had been even a remote possibility that Mughniyah was on that vessel "President Clinton would have gone. No question about it," she says in the CBS interview.

But Soderberg did not address the critical issue. The intel was good enough to justify the extraordinary measures that were undertaken — pulling an Amphibious Ready Group and its embarked Marine

Expeditionary Unit of over 2,000 Marines and attached Navy corpsmen, plus over one thousand ships' crew — out of a planned liberty port.

So, what information changed to say that that Imad Mughniyah was no longer in Bill Clinton's cross hairs?

Soderberg was not asked about the intel that had confirmed Mughniyah was on board the *Ibn Tufail* — his fingerprints!

In the 1985 hijacking and the murder of Navy diver Robert Stetham, Mughniyah had made a fundamental mistake. He'd left behind his fingerprints, and U.S. intelligence agents had pulled these prints and filed them for future use. This proved to be an especially wise precaution in Mughniyah's case since he later had several sessions of plastic surgery to keep hostile counter-terrorist agencies from having a current idea of his visage. (The SEAL teams assigned to take down the *Ibn Tufail* did in fact have a photo that had been faxed in by satellite phone. It was the "best copy available," but the fingerprints were the "actionable intel.")

When the word first came into U.S. intelligence channels that Mughniyah was aboard the *Ibn Tufail*, a crash effort ensued to obtain confirming evidence

that the suspected target was in fact the number one most-wanted terrorist on the U.S. list. The tradecraft that produced confirmation that Mughniyah was on board the *Ibn Tufail* rightly remains a tightly held story, but the troops on-scene knew that their target was riding a merchant ship that would be in international waters, and would be subject to being stopped and searched as part of a United Nations authorized sanctions against Iraq.

Soderberg was not asked two obvious questions. First, since the U.S. Navy and Marines were routinely inspecting merchant ships in this area, what would have been the downside of allowing the operation against Mughniyah to proceed? Worst-case scenario — the target was not on the ship, and the U.S. says that the report of the *Ibn Tufail* carrying proscribed Iraqi cargo — pick one: dates, figs, oil, etc. — was mistaken. The ship continues its journey. No harm, no foul.

Second, how did Imad Mughniyah get off the *Ibn Tufail* without being noticed while on a ship, at sea, under the microscope of every technical surveillance sensor the U.S. government possessed?

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ed to catch or kill Mughniyah, standing-down was another frustrating sign that the Clinton administration lacked the political courage to put American servicemen at risk in the fight against terrorism. The troops were willing but several believed that William Jefferson Clinton did not want a maritime version of the Mogadishu debacle, not at a time when the 1996 presidential election was heading into the home stretch.

Asked how he saw this operation's potential, had it been allowed to go forward, Garrett said it was very important to the Marines. "I think it was critically important. I think this could have been one of those life-changing events that had it been successful, would have been, certainly for me, would have eclipsed anything that I had done in my career before, including Desert Storm." He also saw Mughniyah's bombing of the Marine barracks in 1983 as the Marine Corps' own 9/11, and as with 9/11, the perpetrator has not been brought to justice.

Bill McSwain wrote this entry in his diary just hours after the operation was called off.

"We were so close we could taste it. Maybe we'll get another shot at this guy, but probably not. I think I just missed the biggest chance I'll ever get. Why couldn't it have turned out differently?"

What would it have meant the last few years if Mughniyah had been out of commission?"

"I think you could go a long way toward unraveling or even preventing a September 11th, by getting a person like this," says former CIA spook Bob Baer.

Tom Short also questions how history might have been different. He told CBS, "9-11 happens. And I remember walking into the kitchen that morning, turning on the TV, and staring at that plane, flying into the World Trade Center. And at that instant, I thought 'is this guy involved? Did he have a hand in the planning? What would have happened if we had gotten him?'"

While that question can never be answered with complete assurance, there is one question that can be answered with near absolute certainty: "Does Bill Clinton wonder nearly every day if this is the day that Imad Mughniyah kills more Americans?"

Lt. Col. Roger Charles, USMC (Ret.), is a U.S. Naval Academy grad who has contributed numerous articles to SOF. ✕

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Gunsite Carbine Course

Continued from page 63

shot, so I shot what I could see. One shot went to the lower abdomen of the bad guy. In reflex he straightened up and I whacked him again, center-chest. That man was down, but it wasn't over yet.

Get His Gun

I approached the fallen murderer carefully. With my muzzle contacting his chest, I retrieved his handgun with my support hand. Now I had two handguns and a carbine. In a sequence reminiscent of a hundred B movies I cleared the house with a handgun in either hand until Ken Campbell called "Marshmallow." Jeff Stewart, the bad guy, got to his feet and described the incident from his perspective. This was valuable feedback.

Back at the square range, Pat had the students drilling (again) on the MEU (SOC) course. He kept us going through drill after drill until 1500 hours, when we broke for the afternoon. Then, it was time for dinner prior to our night-hoot.

In my night outdoor simulator, I moved to the "Donga," a dry gully. I turned on my Aimpoint only to find that the dot filled the objective with a field of red. Having had LASIC surgery, I find that the Aimpoint gives me a "starred" image. It is only by turning the dot down all the way that I can function at all in the dark. My accuracy went completely downhill at night. This was perhaps the most valuable lesson I gained during my class. At night, I need a specific dot setting, and I need to proceed very carefully. Dan McNutt patiently worked with my difficulties.

Ken Campbell then took me to the indoor night simulator, where I opened the front door and carefully "pied" the first room, scanning with the flashlight until I found a woman with a gun. "Drop the gun," I told this woman. "Screw you," replied Ken, acting the part of the "bad girl." WHACK-WHACK, I replied, letting the AR-15 do my talking. I moved on, clearing the house methodically, remembering to check everything. I am doing just great. Or not.

After the exercise Ken and I evaluated the hits. We came back to the first target, the woman with a gun. There were two perfect hits center-chest, right through the policewoman's badge. We do not harm the innocent at Gunsite.

This is a big, fat Bad Thing To Do.

My heart was in my boots at this point, but Ken rescued me. "In the walk-through before the exercise, even we Instructors didn't see that badge. It's tough to read a two-dimensional target at night, and hard enough just to see the gun. Bob, this one is our fault. Your sin is expiated." I gave a great sigh of relief.

Friday was the last day of our class. I felt a sense of regret as the class came to an end. It is all too rare to train with people and instructors like this. Any class at Gunsite is a significant event in my life, and this was one of the most significant courses I've ever taken.

During the morning, we fought our way through two long, complex simulators. In the outdoor simulator, there were so many targets that most of us had to transition to the pistol. In the indoor simulator, a "pop-up" target appeared after the student had cleared a window. The Barn-stud got almost all of us with that one!

Pat had us fire the MEU(SOC) course again with the strict time values (much harder), and then we were given a surprise: There would be a 250-level man-on-man shoot-off for our section.

The Shoot-Off

In the shoot-off, two people make ready with pistol and carbine. On the start signal, each shooter knocks down two Pepper Poppers, performs a speed-reload and knocks down his half of a Split Popper. Whichever half of the Split Popper lies on the bottom at the end determines the winner. This sounds simple until you try to do it with the other guy trying his best to beat you. Man-on-man exercises are an exercise in staying cool while attending to the basics of marksmanship.

Each of us had six bouts to win or lose. During the ensuing exercise, there were surprise upsets and some great shooting. There were malfunctions and sloppy reloads. In desperation a few of us degraded to "spray and pray" tactics. The tension mounted as we got down to the last few contests.

I won three bouts and lost two. Then, I was called to the line a last time to shoot against another classmate. This gentleman is employed by a three-letter organization that does nonexistent things in unspecified foreign countries. He is a cool customer and a great shot.

Pat ordered, "Load the carbine with two rounds, and the pistol with one round. You will complete this

exercise in three rounds! On the start signal hit the two Poppers with the carbine, then transition to the pistol to hit the split popper."

I breathe to oxygenate and blow out the tension. As if from a distance, I hear the command to fire as my dot comes to rest on the first Popper. I hardly hear the carbine fire. Moving the dot to second Popper, my shot breaks cleanly. My hand flies to my holster as I release the bale in time to get a clear picture of the front sight as the trigger presses home. God, let me hit. "CLANG!" The shot goes home and my half of the split popper falls first, a solid win. I have won third place in the shoot-off, which is respectable.

Reality check: In a place like Gunsite, with this level of instruction and with this very advanced group of shooters, it would be an honor to be last in the class.

The Final Assembly

Back in the classroom, we sat and filled out our course critiques. Gunsite uses these forms to improve the course offerings. Positive and negative feedback is processed immediately. In this way, Gunsite keeps getting better all the time.

Then, we were called to the dais to receive our certificates. Pat, Ken and Dan had a few remarks for each of us, and we were subjected to good-natured teasing. I was surprised to find that I received an "E-ticket," which denotes a grade of Expert with the carbine. This is a great honor, not often given out at Gunsite.

If you like getting new information, training hard and shooting exciting simulators, you will like the Gunsite 556 class. If you or your unit intend to operate in the middle east, you will find that the climate is similar to that of the Islamic Paradise. It is a great opportunity to test your weapons, your gear, your technique — and yourself.

I was glad that I hardened myself for 556. I found that I could work in tactical gear adequately. I got a great deal of new techniques to put in my "toolkit," and I got great instruction from people who have been there and done that. I had a chance to enjoy the company of an unusually skilled group of students, and will enjoy the memories for years to come. As a dear friend likes to say, "It was a gathering of eagles."

A self-confessed computer technician, Bob Shimizu lives and writes in Prescott, Arizona.

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Winning Hearts & Minds

Continued from page 47

salaries of teachers who hadn't been paid for months.

Before going out, we always made sure we brought along goodies to give out to the kids along the rutted dirt roads or in the villages as we drove through. Always we had candy to hand out and throw out the windows of our Toyota Tacomas — most from the "Care Packages" sent to "Any Soldier" from ordinary citizens back home. Our supply chain provided us with cases upon cases of Kellogg little single-breakfast boxes, long-shelf-life single serving milk and Juicy Juice by the pallet, and there was no way in a decade we could have eaten or drunk all of it, so they became staples we tossed to the kids from our Toyotas or handed out at makeshift refugee camps and nomad stopovers.

"There I was, knee-deep in Frosted Flakes and Juicy Juice" Who knows — 10 or 15 years in the future when young men are being preached hatred for America by some Taliban organizer, they will remember fondly the Americans and our boxes of Sugar Smacks, Corn Pops and Apple Jacks or the sweet fruit punch Juicy Juice and chocolate milk.

That's what it's all about, ultimately, winning hearts and minds ... for the future. Sure, except for scattered cells of resistance, presently the Taliban and al Qaeda have been defeated and driven from Afghanistan. Still today, conventional units and Special Forces are securing the peace.

In the rural outback where my team operated for seven months, the peace was a delicate ballet in an unconventional warfare Wild West environment in which we, as the sheriffs, used diplomacy, kindness and people skills more often than guns to pave the way in the future for when the Afghans themselves can do the same without us.

It might not make for an exciting scene in an action movie — a guns-up ODA bouncing down a rutted path in the middle of nowhere Afghanistan in their Tacomas, tossing hard candy, Frosted Mini Wheats and Juicy Juice out to the kids — but it's a symbol of the other side of the SF coin. One that would make anyone proud to be an American.

A Green Beret since 1978, Paul Avallone has served in the 7th, 12th and 20th Special Forces Groups. ✕

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The New 6.8mm, Part 2

Continued from page 68

tion sample PRI magazine, and a number of failures to feed were experienced. When we tried a standard M16 30-round (25-round in 6.8mm), both rifles ran perfectly on semi- and full-automatic.

Felt recoil was mild and both variations were easy to control in burst fire, helped by the OPS, Inc. SOPMPD muzzle brake. Measured by a Competition Electronics Pocket Pro timer, the rate of fire fluctuated at about 720 rpm on the Recce Rifle, but this rifle was brand new and somewhat tight. Since the sample SOPMOD suppressor was in 5.56mm (.223 Remington caliber), it could not be tested with the 6.8mm Rem SPC ammunition and was used for photos only. All in all, the shorter Recce Rifle seemed easier to control than a full-automatic M16 in 7.62x39mm, and muzzle flash at night seemed subjectively dim.

As far as accuracy, both rifles performed excellently at 100 yards, with the SPR variant shooting the Remington factory ammunition with the Hornady 115-gr. bullet coming in first. However, with only a small quantity of handloaded 6.8mm REM SPC rounds loaded with Sierra 115-gr. Match King bullets, I cannot guarantee that factory-loaded ammunition and extensive shooting would not have changed things.

With the Hornady 115-gr. bullet from the SPR, my best group was 0.525" with an average of 0.88," and using the Sierra bullet the best group was 1.09" with an average of 1.24." With the Recce Rifle and Hornady bullets my best group was 0.93" with an average of 1.21" and with the Sierra handloads my best group was 1.15" with an average of 1.31." This is very good accuracy from an M16-type weapon. My Competition Electronics Chronograph measured average muzzle velocity from the Remington factory 6.8mm at 2714 fps from the 18.5" barrel SPR and 2621 fps from the 16.5" barrel Recce Rifle.

Elevation was 7,000 feet and temperature was 62F. To minimize human error, all groups were fired from a Lahti Rifle Evaluator.

During my research on the 6.8mm Rem SPC, an SPC Project Team member who is in the U.S. Navy referred to the round as a "wonderful" cartridge. I hadn't heard such a term such used to describe a rifle cartridge since hearing the .30-06

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described as "magnificent" decades ago. The .30-06 was indeed magnificent, and today the term "wonderful" certainly applies to the 6.8mm Rem SPC.

A Great Sporting Cartridge, Too

During my tests of the 6.8mm Rem SPC cartridge, I had the opportunity to hunt with it using a custom converted CZ sporting rifle. The ammunition furnished me consisted of handloads using new Remington primed brass and Hornady 110-gr. V-Max .270-caliber bullets and a powder charge slightly less than factory specifications. The muzzle velocity chronographed from the 22-inch barrel averaged 2,791 fps and it produced under 1 MOA accuracy.

I am also fortunate to be the first person to kill a mule deer with this 6.8mm Rem SPC rifle, a 200-pound buck taken at 75 yards with a single shot.

At the 2004 SHOTshow, Remington introduced three new 6.8mm Rem SPC loadings. These were the Remington Express 6.8mm Rem SPC 115-gr. BTHP, Product #249206; Remington Express 6.8mm Rem SPC 115-gr. Metal Case, Product #656591, and the Remington Premier Match 6.8mm Rem SPC 115-gr. Matchking BTHP, Product #258141. Although Remington was rumored to have made a handful of 6.8mm rifles, it did not introduce such a gun at the 2004 SHOTshow; However, Gemtech did. This was a custom bolt-action Remington Model 700P Light Tactical Rifle (LTR) equipped with Gemtech's new 6.8mm Suppressor. Bill Jarvis, of Jarvis Custom is also in production of 6.8 conversions for the Remington 700P, and other rifle makers are eagerly awaiting the opportunity to chamber rifles in this caliber.

Barrett Firearms

At the 2003 Association of the United States Army (AUSA) Show, Barrett Firearms Manufacturing, Inc., of M82A1/M107 .50-caliber sniper rifle fame, announced that it would be producing 6.8mm Rem SPC upper receiver groups available to the Military for Light Infantry and Special Operation consideration, as well as complete "Recce" rifles for law enforcement and private citizens. As with Barrett's M107 .50 BMG caliber rifle, the new 6.8mm will be made to the most strict military specifications and will have a number of new innovations that remain close-hold for now. In addition to complete semi-automatic only and selective fire "Recce" rifles and component groups, Barrett may offer a 12" barrel suppressed version. In the mean-

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time, the Navy has requested 20 6.8mm "Recce" conversions.

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The 6.8mm Advanced Rifle Cartridge was not conceived by soldiers to compete against the 7.62mm NATO cartridge or the heavy, cumbersome rifles that fire it. They did it to fill a combat capability void with current combat rifles and future systems such as the XM8. They did it because no one in the "System" would do it for them, even after years of repeated memorandums and briefings in the wake of Somalia. Soldiers envision the 6.8mm SPC to give all service members a more lethal capability, and the 6.8mm instills more confidence in soldiers' ability to meet and defeat the enemy.

Our young soldiers who comprise the light-fighter infantry, mechanized infantry, support troops, (such as the 507th Maintenance crew), or special operations operators, have one thing in common; their need for a cartridge that not only returns confidence in their primary combat rifle to provide Force Protection and combat capability, but one that also shows that the leadership they depend upon has their best interests in mind. Just as important is that the acquisition corps can respond to a need from the field just as well as high-dollar corporations.

Not only can the 6.8mm REM SPC do anything better, bullet-for-bullet, than the 5.56x45mm NATO, but it is also far superior to both the 7.62x39mm and 5.45x39mm rounds that have been and are still being used against our troops throughout the world. As such, it will give our soldiers the advantage throughout the 300-meter world in which they live and fight.

If a 50,000-seat stadium can have a retractable roof, a 60,000 horsepower submarine can run silent beneath the oceans, and a two-year-old kid can have four wheel steering, then our sons and daughters and husbands and wives in uniform can have an improved capability to defeat the enemy in head-to-head combat. This capability will sharpen the tip of the spear!

Will the 6.8mm SPC make it past the "not-invented-here" (NIH) military small arms bureaucracy? Can it survive the "Let's study it for 5 years" bunch while the troops are fighting for their lives? I, and many soldiers who are in harm's way (along with their loved ones), pray that it will. To quote one very respected senior Special Forces

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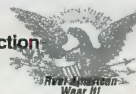
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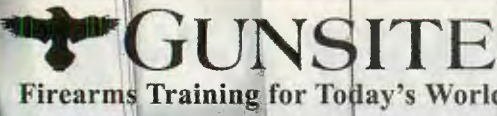
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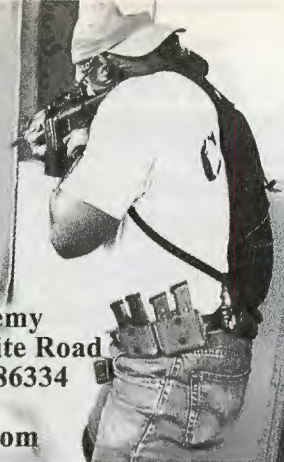
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Warrant Officer, "The 6.8 rocks!"

Our soldiers need a leader to champion this effort. Considering all the other multi-million dollar items that flow through the DoD Acquisition System, this one was relatively inexpensive, and I believe Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, should move it to the front of the line! ✕

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Command Guidance

Continued from page 6

after 11 September 2001.

As we all know, the Clintons made life hard for the gun industry during this time. Rather than roll over and play dead to an anti-gun White House, Val began going to Washington on a regular basis to advance pro-gun issues on Capitol Hill. Val didn't just work with pro-gun members of Congress, but the fence-sitters as well who often decided close votes on the matter.

Collectively, Val possess the skills that are vital to protecting our rights as gun owners and our way of life. He is young enough to have the energy, and old enough to have the experience. He's smart, organized and knows how to fight to win. He is a hunter, shooter, gun collector, a member of the gun industry and has the right contacts in Washington. In short, he's what we need on the NRA board. You can help make that happen.

Turn Your NRA Ballot Into A Bullet

The balloting process for the NRA board involves a list of a couple of dozen nominees. The election rules allow for a voting member to vote for as many as 25 names on the ballot. However, you can vote for less than 25, even 1.

This is where you can make a "bullet ballot." By only choosing one name, it significantly enhances the power of your vote. If there is one person on the ballot you really want on the board, every vote you cast for any other nominee will, in effect, negate that vote. For example, let's say you really want candidate "A" to win. If you just vote for candidate "A", he will have 1 more vote than all other candidates. If you also vote for candidate "B", then you have just taken away the advantage of candidate "A." If just one other voter casts only a vote for candidate "B," then "B" would win 2-1, due to your vote.

Don't let that happen, turn your ballot into a bullet.

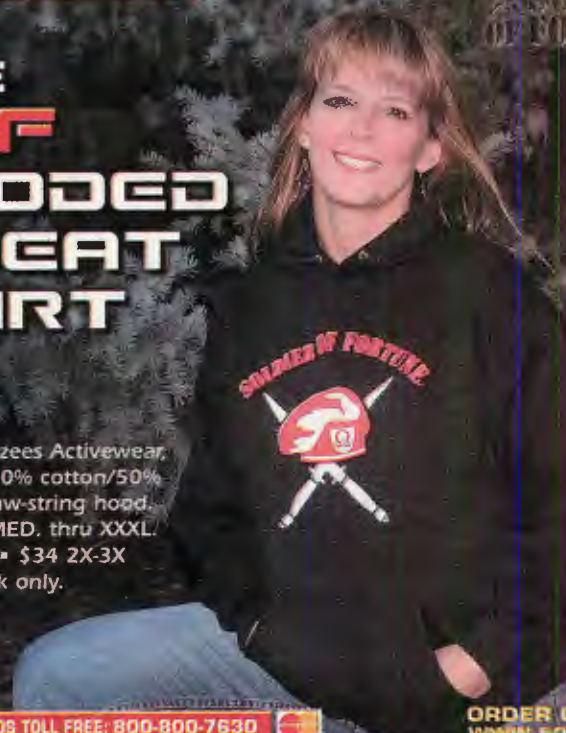
By using your ballot to cast just one vote, for Val Forgett, III, you can make the difference. If there are other nominees you feel strongly about, then vote for them as well, but don't dilute your votes to get to 25. Choose the nominees you feel strongly just one about, and be sure to include Val Forgett, III among them.

Vote Val J. Forgett, III for NRA board of directors, make your ballot a bullet. ☛




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SOUND OFF

by Col. David H. Hackworth, USA (Ret.)

Saddam In The Slammer, So Why Are We On Orange?

Almost daily [as we go to press] we're told that another American soldier has sacrificed life or limb in Iraq. For way too many of us — unless we have a white flag with a blue star in our window — these casualty reports have become as big a yawn as a TV forecast of the weather in Baghdad.

Even I — and I deal with that beleaguered land seven days a week — was staggered when a Pentagon source gave me a copy of a Nov. 30 dispatch showing that since George W. Bush unleashed the dogs of war, our armed forces have taken 14,000 casualties in Iraq — about the number of warriors in a line tank division.

We have the equivalent of five combat divisions plus support for a total of about 135,000 troops deployed in the Iraqi theater of operations, which means we've lost the equivalent of a fighting division since March. At least 10 percent of the total number of Joes and Jills available to the theater commander to fight or support the occupation effort have been evacuated back to the USA!

Lt. Col. Scott D. Ross of the U.S. military's Transportation Command told me that as of Dec. 23, his outfit had evacuated 3,255 battle-injured casualties and 18,717 non-battle injuries.

Of the battle casualties, 473 died and 3,255 were wounded by hostile fire.

Following are the major categories of the non-battle evacuations:

Orthopedic surgery — 3,907
General surgery — 1,995
Internal medicine — 1,291
Psychiatric — 1,167
Neurology — 1,002
Gynecological — 491

Sources say that most of the gynecological evacuations are pregnancy-related, although the exact figure can't be confirmed — Pentagon pregnancy counts are kept closer to the vest than the number of nuke warheads in the U.S. arsenal.

Ross cautioned that his total of 21,972 evacuees could be higher than other reports because "in some cases, the same service member may be counted more than once."

The Pentagon has never won prizes for the accuracy of its reporting, but I think it's safe to say that so far somewhere between 14,000 and 22,000 soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines have been medically evacuated from Iraq to the USA.

So at the end of this turbulent year, we must ask ourselves: Was the price our warriors paid in blood worth the outcome? Are we any safer than before our pre-emptive invasion?



Even though Saddam is in the slammer and the fourth-largest army in the world is junkyard scrap, Christmas 2003 was resolutely Orange, and 2004 looks like more of the same. Or worse.

Our first New Year's resolution should be to find out if the stated reasons for our pre-emptive strike — Iraq's purported weapons of mass destruction and Saddam's connection with al-Qaeda — constituted a real threat to our national security. Because, contrary to public opinion, the present administration hasn't yet made the case that Saddam and his sadists aided and abetted al-Qaeda's attacks on 9/11.

We also need to know why our \$30 billion-a-year intelligence agencies didn't read the tea leaves correctly, as well as what's being done besides upgrading the color code to prevent other similar strikes.

Congress should get with the program and lift a page from the U.S. Army handbook on how to learn from a military operation. When an Army training or actual combat op is concluded, all the key players assemble for an honest, no-holds-barred critique of everything that's gone down — the good, the bad and the — ugly. Some of the participants might walk away black and blue, but everyone learns from the mistakes.

Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz and retired Gen. Tommy Franks should be required to report to a congressional committee convened to investigate both the invasion and the planning — or lack of planning — for the occupation of Iraq. This committee must operate without the political skullduggery that occurred during the numerous investigations into the Pearl Harbor catastrophe — when high-level malfeasance that cost thousands of lives and put America's national security in extreme jeopardy was repeatedly covered up for more than 50 years.

Our Iraqi casualties deserve nothing less than the unvarnished truth. Only then will their sacrifices not have been in vain. And only then can we all move on with the enlightenment we need to protect and preserve our precious country's future.

www.hackworth.com is the address of David Hackworth's homepage.

Sign in for the free weekly *Defending America* column at his Web site. Send mail to P.O. Box 11179, Greenwich, CT 06831. His newest book is *Steel My Soldiers' Hearts*.

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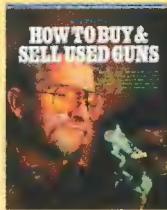
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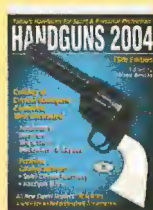
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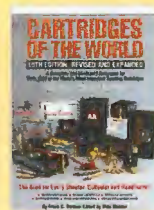
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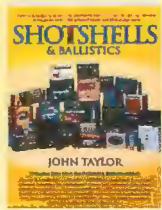
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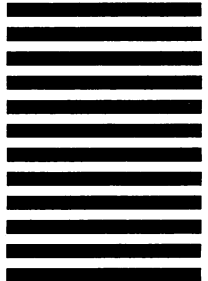
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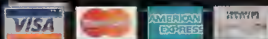
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